# Lamiel

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*Lamiel*

STENDHAL

MARIE HENRI BEYLE

# *Lamiel*

OR

# THE WAYS OF THE HEART

*Translation and Preface by*

JACQUES LE CLERCQ

*Brentano's · Publishers*

NEW YORK · 1929

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UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA BY THE VAIL-
BALLOU PRESS, BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 1929
SECOND PRINTING MARCH 1929

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## *Translator's Preface*

*Lamiel* is Stendhal's last work: he was engaged in writing it when he died. He must have begun it before 1839 for when the *Chartreuse de Parme* appeared in that year he announced a two-volume novel entitled *Amiel*. At various times he had considered calling the work *A Norman Village*, *The French under King Louis Philippe*, *Amiel*, *L'Amiel* and finally *Lamiel*. The mere changes of title are interesting in as much as they illustrate Stendhal's method of work and, what is more important, the development of his original idea. From a broad canvass of country-life, Stendhal turned to one equally broad of social and political conditions; but in the end—and no wonder!—the charm and intensity of Lamiel's character committed him to the grateful task of adding to his rich gallery of portraits still another destined to reveal his genius. Lamiel is indeed a "little sister to Julien Sorel."

The original edition of *Lamiel* appeared posthumously in 1889, almost fifty years after Stendhal's death, thanks to the efforts of Casimir Stryienski. The book was long out of print, and, save for a limited edition some two years ago, virtually unobtainable. It has not yet appeared in the authoritative Champion edition. It appears now for the first time in English.

*Lamiel* is of course unfinished: it is not unreasonable to believe that the completed work would have been twice again as long. The plan of the book, given in the Conclusion, shows how far the story would have reached and what perfect grist it would have proved for Stendhal's mill. Yet the present volume is much more than a fragment of *Stendhaliana.* The study of the development of a character such as Lamiel; the fine, mordant sketches of the Duchess, of the young Duke, and especially of Dr. Sansfin; the simple and delicate treatment of the Abbé Clément are in themselves priceless. Again, such incidents as Lamiel's search for the meaning of love, her discovery of it, her elopement with Fédor and her affair with the

Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde make rich, swift, racy reading.

For this reason, I have departed from the original version in several instances, though never to Stendhal's detriment and only in cases where he had indicated a note rapidly and where I incorporated it in the text. In one place I have changed a word where there was an obvious error in edition: Stendhal's notes were as often as not practically illegible.

For, after all, the present edition of *Lamiel* is no collector's item for a snob audience nor provender for the potential Ph.D. Stendhal knew what he was about: if, in his own day, he wrote, as he said, for an odd hundred people of whom he knew only two or three, he nevertheless saluted his vaster public in the twentieth century. Let the Romanticists claim him: to be sure he stood for the individual even though he saw through the shoddy theatricality of the movement. Let the Realists and Naturalists enlist him under their banner, for certainly no man ever wrote who examined more searchingly the details of milieu and person; let

the psychologists acclaim him, give him any label you will, it is all one. They have told time and again that he was obscure (what a legend!), that his aridity and minuteness of style, his passion for paradox, his *difficulty*, in a word, kept him from being an author of the first rank. They have likewise made of him an idol greater than the colossus Balzac as though either wished the other in his galley. What they have always seemed loath to do is to present him on his own merits and let him stand or fall by them, like the latest author of the day, according to our present standards of judgment (if we have any).

It is the timeliness of *Lamiel* that makes it such an exciting book. The Grand' Rue of Hauteville, Calvados, is certainly not too different from your Main Street in an Iowa *kraal;* Madame de Miossens is surely not too far removed from a modern *grande dame* such as Mr. Walpole, for example, might draw; and, if Dr. Sansfin is a unique grotesque, there are still plenty of gentle Cléments, of timid Fédors and of terrifying du Saillards abroad among us. Nor, do I suspect, is there a scarcity

of Lamiels among the sisterhood we call, for want of a better name, flappers. Is not curiosity a stimulant old as the world? And I defy you, for all our present-day background of tabloid newspapers, moving-pictures, boudoir-motor-cars, jazz and bootleg gin to find a scene more natural, more sensationally factual, more piquant, more diverting and more downright modern than that which occurred when the amiable Lamiel took a second stroll through the flowery woods of Carville.

*Jacques Le Clercq*

*Lamiel*

# I

## *Carville*

I FEAR we are somewhat unfair to the countryside of our beautiful Normandy, where each and any of us may go and sleep this very evening. People vaunt the merits of Switzerland; but you achieve its beauteous mountains only at the cost of three days of ennui, the vexations of the customs and passports plastered with visas. On the other hand, as soon as you begin to enter Normandy, your eye, tired of the symmetries of Paris and of its white walls, is greeted by an ocean of greenery.

The sad gray plains lie back towards Paris; the road cuts its way through valley on smiling valley; high hills with tree-crowned crests stand boldly out against the sky so limiting the horizon as to stir the imagination to fine flights of fancy, which is a new pleasure indeed for the Parisian.

Do you push further forward, you perceive on

your right, between the trees covering the landscape, the sea, the sea without which no countryside can lay claim to perfect beauty!

If the charm of distance warms your eye to the beauties of the landscape and you seek detail, you will find that each range forms a sort of enclosure surrounded by walls of earth; the ditches margin the boundaries of every field, dotted by clumps of young elms, in perfect regularity.

Such is the view two miles from Carville, as you come from Paris towards the sea. In this village then, a few years ago, occurred the story of the Duchesse de Miossens and Doctor Sansfin.

On the Paris side, the beginning of the village, lost amid the apple-trees, lies in the folds of the valley; but a hundred paces from the last houses, whence the view stretches from the northwest to the sea and the Mont Saint Michel, you take a trim new bridge to cross a limpid pretty brook which is minded to run very swiftly. (Everything in Normandy has a mind of its own; there nothing is done without a reason, and sometimes it is a very shrewdly calculated reason). This, however, is not

what delights me at Carville; indeed when I used to spend the month of partridges there, I remember that I would have been very happy had I known no French. I, the son of a notary of small means, stayed at the château of Madame d'Albret de Miossens, the wife of the former lord of the district! She had returned to France only in 1814. In 1826 that was a great honor!

The village of Carville reaches out amid the fields in a valley almost parallel to the sea, which you can see as soon as you climb a few feet; the château dominates the landscape; but it was only by day that I could enjoy the tranquil beauties of this countryside. In the evening (an evening which began when the dinner bell rang at five o'clock), you had to pay your court to Madame la Duchesse de Miossens, and she was no woman to suffer her rights to be prescribed.

Madame de Miossens was only thirty years old; she never for a moment forgot the loftiness of the rank she had achieved at such pains. In Paris, she was very devout; the Faubourg Saint-Germain was glad to ask her to preside over charity bazaars and

kindred functions, but this was the only tribute it would pay her. Married at the age of sixteen to the old man who was to make her a Duchess (the Marquis d'Albret lost his father just as the Duchesse de Miossens turned twenty-eight) she had had to spend her whole youth coveting the honors still paid a Duchess by Society in the reign of Charles X. Indeed, the Duchess was not remarkable for her intelligence.

Such, then, was the great lady at whose château I spent the month of September, provided I would busy myself, from five o'clock to midnight, with the gossip and tattle of Carville, a place you will not find on the map, about which I ask leave to retail horrors, that is to say a part of the truth. For the guile and the sordid calculations of these Normans diverted me from the complicated life in Paris almost not at all. My entrée at Madame de Miossens' I owed to the circumstance of being the grandson and son of the good Messieurs Lagier, who since time immemorial were the notaries of the d'Albret de Miossens or rather of the Miossens who claimed to be d'Albret.

Game abounded and was excellently kept on this estate; but the lord of the manor, a peer of France, a member of the highest nobility and a churchman, never left the Court of Charles X, and their only son, Fédor de Miossens, was a mere schoolboy. As for me, a fine day's shooting made up for everything, so far as I was concerned.

In the evening you had also to suffer Monsieur l'Abbé du Saillard, a great Congrégationist whose duty it was to watch the curés of the neighborhood. His character, profound as Tacitus, bored me; it possessed no qualities calculated to occupy my attention at the time. Monsieur du Saillard supplied ideas on the events reported in the *Quotidienne* to seven or eight noblemen of the neighborhood.

From time to time a very amusing humpback appeared in Madame de Miossens' salon; him I found more diverting. He sought to please the ladies and, it was said, actually succeeded.

This original character was Dr. Sansfin; in 1830, he must have been about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age; had he laid no claim to the rôle of a

Don Juan, this physician would have been passable. The only son of a local farmer, enriched by the nationalization of property during the Revolution, Sansfin had studied medicine to learn how to care for himself; he had taken up hunting so as always to go armed among the villagers who might have been tempted to poke fun at him; he had joined forces with the shrewd Abbé du Saillard to give himself a semblance of power in the region.

Had the Doctor dressed like everyone else, he would have met with less ridicule; but it was common knowledge that he sent to Paris for his clothes and that, with a pretentiousness truly unbearable in a Norman village, he had taken a barber from the capital for servant. Yet he was surprised that people made fun of him!

A magnificent black beard, cut far too full and trimmed with infinite art, adorned the Doctor's head. His appearance would not have proved so shocking except that unfortunately as in Béranger's song, the head had no body to speak of. Hence Sansfin's predilection for the play. Seated in the first row of a loge, he looked like anyone else, but

the moment he rose or showed a frail little body tricked out in the latest style, the effect was irresistible.

"Look at that frog there!" somebody would cry out from the pit.

What an epithet for a would-be lady-killer!

One evening—observe the excess of our idleness—we were tracing in the ashes of the hearth the initials of the ladies for whom we had committed such blunders as had proved most wounding to our pride. It was I, I recall, who had invented this trial of love. The Vicomte de Sainte-Foi drew the letters M and B. Then the Duchess, without abandoning her haughty manner, insisted he relate all he could of the youthful follies he had committed for the sake of M and B. An old Chevalier de Saint Louis, Monsieur de Malivert, traced the letters A and E; then, having said all he could, he passed the tongs to Dr. Sansfin. A smile played across the lips of the company. But proudly the Doctor drew D, C, J and F.

"What! You are a great deal younger than I am," cried the Chevalier de Malivert, whose age

permitted him to laugh somewhat, "yet there are four letters written in your heart!"

"Since Madame la Duchesse insisted we obey her wish and be sincere," the humpback answered gravely, "I am forced to give these four initials."

For the three hours that followed an excellent dinner, consisting of delicacies brought from Paris by the Duchess' lackeys, eight or ten of us had been striving to maintain a languishing conversation. The Doctor's answer brought joy to every heart; our eyes gleamed, we all drew our chairs up to the hearth.

From the first word he uttered, so curious was the humpback's solemnity and so affected his expressions that we were one and all moved to mirth. To crown all this gaiety, the fair D, C, J and F had loved him, respectively, to the point of madness. Madame de Miossens, who was dying to burst out laughing, made sign upon sign to us to moderate our gaiety.

"You will kill the goose that laid the golden egg," she said to Monsieur de Sainte-Foi, who sat

beside her, "please pass around the word of order: Gentlemen, control your mirth!"

The Doctor was so absorbed by his ideas that nothing could rouse him. I think he was inventing the details of a novel prepared by him beforehand, and, as he told them, he must have enjoyed them. What he lacked, as he proved later when fortune knocked at his door, was one ounce of good, sound, common sense. That evening the good Doctor was relating not merely his conquests but even the details of sentiment and the shades of feeling that had governed the behavior of the luckless D, C, J and F, so often neglected by their conqueror.

In vain, the Vicomte de Sainte-Foi compared the Doctor to the Marquis de Caraccioli, reminding us of that ambassador from the Two Sicilies to whom Louis XVI said:

"Do you make love in Paris, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur?"

"No, Sire," was the answer, "I buy it ready-made." Sansfin persisted in telling his story.

If you were willing to forget her haughtiness,

Madame de Miossens had charming manners; she was perfectly happy when people made her laugh. She enjoyed the gaiety of others, but her pride forbade her the slightest action necessary to move others to gaiety.

Yes, she had admirable manners, the flower of gentleness; and although it was my love of hunting that brought me back two or three times a year to her château, for at least forty-eight hours her manners gave me the illusion that here was a woman of intelligence; my imagination even endowed her with ideas, whereas what she really possessed was but the perfection of the jargon of Society. What amused me and prevented me from taking this household seriously was that you could not accuse her of entertaining a single correct notion; she saw everything from the point of view of a Duchess and, more, of one whose ancestors had gone to the Crusades.

The Revolution of 1789 and Voltaire were not odious to her, they were things that had not happened. Such absurdity embraced the minutest detail: (for instance, she called the Mayor of Car-

ville by his obsolete pre-Revolution title, Master Alderman); it consoled me for every misfortune that had befallen me during my twenty-two years of life; it prevented me from attaching the slightest importance to any of the impertinences that overran the château and drove the neighboring nobles away. The only way the Duchess could assemble ten people about her table was to pay her chef ten francs per head over and above the enormous wages and all expenses paid to an ordinary cook.

At bottom, Madame de Miossens found life bitterly tedious; the man she detested most, as an infamous Jacobin, was happy in Paris and reigned there. This Jacobin was none other than that amiable academician known to the world as Louis XVIII.

Amid this country life into which her disgust at Paris had plunged her, the Duchess' sole distraction was the village-gossip of Carville; one of her chambermaids, Mademoiselle Pierrette, who had a lover in the village, kept Madame de Miossens remarkably well-informed about it. I was partic-

ularly amused because Pierrette's narrative style employed the plainest terms imaginable; it was diverting, as she repeated her crude, racy observations, to consider her listener, a lady whose language was a model of delicacy to the point of exaggeration.

Thus I was a little bored at the Château de Carville, when a mission came to us, directed by a man of great eloquence, Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud. From the very first day he completely conquered me.

For the Duchess, too, the mission was a stroke of good fortune; every evening brought twenty people to sup at her table. At these suppers, miracles were frequently the topic of discussion. Madame la Comtesse de Sainte-Foi and various other ladies of the neighborhood, who came to the château every evening, mentioned me to Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud as a man he might use. I observed that these ladies, noble as can be by birth and faith, scarcely believed in miracles yet protected them with their influence. I did not miss a single speech of Monsieur l'Abbé's; tiring soon of the in-

sipidities he must perforce bestow on the country-folk, he honored me with his friendship; and as he was far from possessing the prudence of Monsieur l'Abbé du Saillard, he said to me one day:

"You have a fine voice, you know your Latin well, your family will leave you two thousand crowns at most, why do you not join us?"

I meditated long on this step: obviously it was not a bad one. Had the mission in Carville lasted one month longer, I believe I would have enrolled in the Abbé's troupe for a year.

I reckoned up and found I could save enough money to spend a good year in Paris on my return; as I had a horror of scandal, returning with the Abbé Le Cloud's recommendation, I might obtain a post of Sub-Prefect. At the time this seemed to me the height of fortune. If by chance I found pleasure in improvising in the pulpit like the Abbé Le Cloud, I could easily follow this profession.

## II

## *The Mission*

On the last day of the Mission at Carville, noblemen afraid of 1793 and bourgeois who had grown rich and who sought to be fashionable filled the pretty little Gothic church of the village to capacity; but all the faithful had not been able to find room within; a thousand or perhaps twelve hundred remained in the churchyard. The doors of the church were taken off their hinges by order of Monsieur du Saillard; from time to time a burst of oratory from the priest in the pulpit reached the impatient, none too quiet crowd.

Two of the priests had already appeared. Day was slowly declining; it was a sad afternoon in late October. A chorus of sixty devout young girls founded and trained by Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud sang a selection of antiphonals.

By the time they had finished, night had fallen.

Then Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud was good enough to return to the pulpit to utter a few words of final exhortation. As he began, the crowd in the churchyard pressed forward against the door and the low windows of the church; more than one window was broken as they did so. A religious silence reigned over the crowd; all wished to hear the celebrated preacher.

Monsieur Le Cloud spoke that evening like a novel by Mrs. Radcliffe: he launched into a horrific description of Hell. His comminatory phrases boomed out under the Gothic arcades swathed in shadows. (They had been careful not to light the lamps. Monsieur Hautemare, the beadle, had said in a stage whisper that his subordinates could not break their way through the seething crowd, so jealously did each bystander keep his place.)

Suddenly Monsieur Le Cloud interrupted himself, and with fright and distress in his voice, cried out:

"It is abomination, O my brethren! Here are the Gates of Hell!"

It would be impossible to reproduce the effect of

his deep voice, as it boomed and trailed through the church, almost pitchblack and filled with penitents making the sign of the cross. I myself was deeply moved. Monsieur l'Abbé stood facing the altar; he seemed impatient; once more he cried:

". . . The Gates of Hell!"

Suddenly, twenty rockets shot up from behind the altar and a red infernal light illumined the pale faces of the congregation. Certainly at this moment nobody was bored. More than forty women swooned away so completely that they fell on top of their neighbors without uttering a word.

Madame Hautemare, the beadle's wife, was among those who had fainted most seriously; since she could aspire to the foremost rank of village bigotry, all crowded about her. Twenty little boys raced off to tell the beadle, but he sent them angrily away. His duties prevented him from running to his wife's side; he was completely absorbed in removing the last shreds of the wrappers about the fireworks, made of tarred canvas and strings. This office had been assigned and explained at length to him several times by the terrifying Monsieur du

Saillard, the curé of the village. Hautemare was scrupulously careful to discharge it well, since the Curé was the principal creator of his little fortune and he shuddered at the merest suggestion of a frown on the cleric's brow.

Monsieur du Saillard, surveying his flock from the organ-loft, saw that everything was going well and that no one had uttered the word 'fireworks.' He went down into the churchyard. In my opinion, he was somewhat jealous of the Abbé Le Cloud's immense success. The fine art of rewarding and punishing diplomatically or of governing the will of his charges did not belong to the missionary as it did to the Curé; but, on the other hand, he had a facility of speech the other could never approach. Yet du Saillard would not acknowledge his inferiority to himself. Seeing so many people assembled in the churchyard, he could not resist the temptation of going up to the foot of the cross and in turn addressing his flock from this point of vantage. What especially struck me in his address was his hesitancy in terming what had just occurred a miracle. No doubt he thought these were events

that could not frankly be termed miracles until six months after. While he spoke, he listened carefully for mention of 'fireworks,' 'rockets' or 'tricks unworthy of hallowed ground.' This division of attention scarcely helped to kindle an oratorical flame which he lacked by nature. The Curé grew angry; he began to single out the irreverent; now the passion of his ire lent a certain force to his words. His blazing eyes alighted especially upon three persons who chanced to be standing in the churchyard among the good women.

Poor Pernin, a consumptive, was staring at the Curé in a manner that embarrassed the latter considerably. He was a wretched pallid young man who had been dismissed from a Royal College where he taught Mathematics because the College Chaplain had stated that no geometrician could possibly believe in God. Pernin retired to his native village, where he lived with a very poor mother; he taught a few children the four simple arithmetical operations and when he recognized the slightest bent in a lad for his beloved studies, he would teach him Geometry free of charge.

The irritable Curé shuddered as he met Dr. Sansfin's glance, which possessed a very different assurance. By displaying a prudent opposition, Sansfin forced the Curé to infinite complaisances. The Curé found him far too independent and, in my opinion, he sought for an opportunity to embroil him in certain conspiracies such as were afoot at the time. He also considered Sansfin capable of anything in the world to make the young girls he was impertinent enough to pay his court to, forget his hump.

"Such a man," said the Curé, "is quite capable of uttering the impious word 'fireworks' and, at a moment like this, of spoiling everything. In a month, of course, no one will mind!"

The Curé's anger reached its height when six steps away from him he met the glance, astonished rather than ironic, of a schoolboy from Paris, young Fédor de Miossens, Madame la Duchesse de Miossens' only son.

"That little good-for-nothing who arrived yesterday," mused the Curé, "is being brought up in Paris. We shall never find any good coming from

the capital of irony. Why is this child here? The place of honor we allow his family is quite close to the altar; he may very easily have noticed the fuse which set the rockets on fire, and if he breathes a word, these stupid peasants who adore his family will repeat it like an oracle."

All these thoughts ended by so confusing the Curé's eloquence that presently he noticed the women leaving the churchyard in a crowd and was forced to cut short his homily in order not to be left standing there alone.

An hour later I came upon the implacable Curé creating a horrible scene with a young abbé named Lamairette, Fédor's tutor, asking him testily why, in church, he had abandoned his charge.

"On the contrary, Monsieur, it was he who abandoned me," the poor Abbé replied timidly. "I looked for him everywhere and seeing me, apparently he did his level best to elude me."

The Abbé du Saillard called young Lamairette roundly over the coals and ended by threatening him with the unwelcome wrath of the Duchess.

"You will be taking the bread out of my mouth,"

said poor Lamairette in confusion, "indeed, between your reprimands and those of Madame la Duchesse, I scarcely know what saint to commit myself to. Is it my personal fault if the little Count, whose valet tells him daily that he will one day become a duke and have an enormous fortune at his disposal, should turn out to be a mischievous lad and make it a point of vanity to laugh at my expense?"

This answer pleased me; I repeated it to the Duchess who was amused.

"Upon my word, I should almost prefer to retire to my father's, who is porter at the Hôtel de Miossens in Paris, and curb my ambition to soliciting his succession."

"There's an impertinent Jacobin remark for you!" cried du Saillard. "Who told you, pray, that this succession would fall to your lot if I care to make a report against you?"

"The Duke honors me with his protection."

The little Abbé had tears in his eyes; he found it extremely difficult to conceal his emotion from his implacable colleague.

Fédor had come to spend a fortnight and enjoy the pure air of Calvados. This child, whom they sought to make intelligent, had eight masters each of whom gave him one lesson daily. He was, moreover, in poor health. Nevertheless he left for Paris two days after the miracle of the fireworks; the frail, delicate heir to such fine estates slept only three nights in the château of his ancestors. Du Saillard was responsible; Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud and I laughed heartily over the circumstance.

Du Saillard found it difficult indeed to make the Duchess condescend to his will; he had several times to invoke the general interests of the Church. She was most angry, for the explosion of the fireworks had thoroughly frightened her; she had been under the impression that it marked the beginning of a revolt by the Jacobins in unison with the Bonapartists. But as she returned to the château, she found very different grounds for wrath. In her first moment of terror, she disarranged a transformation designed to hide a few white locks; for an hour she had driven in her carriage in plain sight

of all the villagers and, worse, of her own domestics, whom she was especially anxious to deceive.

"Why could you not trust me?" she asked the Abbé du Saillard over and over. "Is it right to do something I know nothing about in my own village? Does the clergy intend to begin its senseless struggle against the nobility again?"

From this degree of exasperation to despatching poor Fédor back to Paris, after the pallid child had been so happy to run about the park and gaze at the sea, was a long step. Yet du Saillard won his point. The child left sadly. Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud said to me:

"This du Saillard may not know how to speak, but he does know how to govern the lowly and to humble the proud. Either of these latter talents is worth the first."

While the château was busied with Fédor's departure, Madame Hautemare, the beadle's wife, was engaged in a serious discussion with her husband. Soon the burden of this discussion, faithfully reported to the Duchess, amused her and made her forget her son's departure.

Monsieur Hautemare held three offices, all of which depended upon the church. He was beadle, choirmaster and schoolmaster. These three positions together might have netted him twenty francs per month; but since the second year of Louis XVIII's reign in Paris, the Curé and Madame de Miossens had obtained leave for him to hold a school for the children of the well-intentioned farmers. The Hautemares had been able to lay by first twenty, then forty francs per month; they were now growing rich. Hautemare the choirmaster, good soul that he was, had turned informer to give the Duchess the name of a malevolent Jacobin peasant who had sworn to kill off all the hares in the district. Now Madame de Miossens firmly believed that these hares belonged to her family and considered their violent death as insult directed personally at her.

This denunciation made the fortune of the beadle and the beadle's school. The Duchess had graciously determined upon an Awarding of Prizes in the large hall of the château, draped with

quantities of tapestry, where places of first and second class were set up. To the first-class places, the Duchess' agent invited the peasant mothers who were landowners; the mere tenants were invited to the inferior places. This alone raised the beadle's pupils from eight or ten in number to sixty. Hautemare's fortune had grown proportionally. Madame Hautemare was not utterly ridiculous, therefore, when, on the evening of the fireworks, after supper, she said to her husband:

"Did you take to heart what Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud said at the end of his exhortation on the duty of rich people? They must, within the limits of their power, give a soul to God! Well," she added, "that thought will not let me be. God has not granted us a child; we are laying by considerable money; after we are dead, whom will it fall to? Will it be used in an edifying manner? Whose fault would it be if this money were to fall into the hands of wrong-thinking folk, into your nephew's for instance—that is, a renegade who in 1815 joined that regiment of brigands called the Corps

Francs, raised to resist the Prussians. I have even heard tell, though I would rather not believe it, that he actually killed a Prussian."

"Oh no, that is not true," cried the kindly Hautemare. "To kill an ally of our King, Louis le Désiré! My nephew is a scapegrace, he sometimes blasphemes when he has been drinking, he misses Mass very often, I grant you; but he never killed a Prussian!"

Madame Hautemare suffered her husband to expatiate upon this subject for an hour, without doing him the charity of an idea. Already the conversation was languishing; at last she put in:

"It would be a good action to adopt a little girl, quite a small child; we could bring her up in the fear of God; that would really be a soul we were giving Him, and, in our old age, the child can look after us."

This idea appeared to move her husband deeply; it meant disinheriting his nephew, Guillaume Hautemare, who bore his name. He exclaimed in protest at great length, then added in a timid voice:

"If at least we adopted Yvonne"—(his nephew's

youngest daughter)—"her father would be afraid and he would stop missing Mass."

"The child would never be really ours. At the end of a year, if he saw we loved her, the Jacobin would threaten to take her away from us. Then the tables would be turned and your nephew, the Jacobin, the Volunteer of 1815, would be master. We would have to make financial sacrifices to prevent them from taking the little girl away from us."

For six months at least, this plan troubled the Norman couple; at last, armed with a letter of recommendation from Monsieur du Saillard, in which Hautemare was given the title of Provost, and flanked by his wife, Hautemare presented himself at the Foundlings' Home in Rouen. Here they chose a little girl four years old, duly vaccinated and already quite attractive. Her name was Lamiel.

Of course when they returned to Carville they said that little Amable Lamiel was their niece, born near Orléans, the daughter of a cousin of theirs, one Miel, a carpenter by trade. But the Norman villagers were not taken in: Sansfin, the humpback physician, declared that Lamiel was born of the

fright the Devil gave them on the evening of the fireworks.

There are good people everywhere, even in Normandy, though here, to be sure, they are much rarer than elsewhere. The good people of Carville were indignant when they saw Hautemare's nephew, who had seven children, so cruelly disinherited. They called Lamiel "the Devil's daughter." Madame Hautemare, with tears in her eyes, came to ask the Curé whether this name would not visit misfortune upon them; the Curé, furious, told her that the doubt she expressed might very easily lead to her eternal damnation. He added that he was taking little Lamiel under his immediate protection, and, a week later, Madame la Duchesse de Miossens and himself declared that Hautemare would henceforth have pupils of two classes. The Duchess had three benches of the beadle's school covered with old tapestries. The children seated on these benches would belong to the first class; the children on the wooden benches to the second. The first-class pupils would pay five francs instead of the four they had paid hitherto; Mademoiselle

Anselme, the Duchess' first chambermaid, confided to two or three intimate friends that, on the occasion of the Awarding of Prizes, it was Madame's intention to invite to the first places the mothers of the first-class pupils, even though they were simple farmers and not landowners. Six months later, it proved necessary to cover almost all the benches in the school with tapestries.

The Hautemares, as they grow rich, deserve our going into further detail about their characters. The best and most pettily pious of men, Hautemare devoted all his energies to the care of the church in his trust. If a painted wooden vase bearing artificial plants did not stand in neat symmetry on the altar, he believed the Mass worthless; he would go incontinent to confess this great sin to the Curé du Saillard, and, on the following Monday, his account of the incident supplied him with his entire conversation with the Duchesse de Miossens.

Weary of Paris, where she no longer played the rôle of a pretty woman, the Duchess had taken up residence more or less permanently at Carville; almost her only company here consisted of

her chambermaids and the Curé du Saillard. The latter was bored in her presence and constantly afraid of speaking out rashly. He therefore appeared only for short visits at the château. But on Sunday, at High Mass, he would incense Madame de Miossens from time to time, and every Monday, Hautemare had the honor of bearing to the château the large loaf of blessed bread which, the day before, had been presented to the pew of the Lord of the Manor, which the Duchess occupied. The Duchess was very particular about this piece of brioche, the brilliant but almost only remnant of the tribute paid to the Miossens in the church of their village for over four centuries.

The Duchess received the beadle in a peculiar fashion. When he came to bring the loaf of blessed bread, the valet-de-chambre took his sword and flung both doors of the salon open, for at the moment the beadle was the Curé's official envoy performing his duty to the person exercising the rights of overlordship. Before he left the château, Hautemare went down to the butler's pantry where he found a meal prepared especially for himself.

The good schoolmaster then went down to the village, relating to every peasant he met, and later to his wife and niece, the details of the dishes he had eaten at luncheon and of everything Madame had deigned to say to him. In the evening, with great deliberation, these kindly people would consider the best way to distribute the alms the Duchess had given Hautemare. This confidence of the Duchess', coupled with the credit that twenty years of attention and passive obedience had given him with the Curé du Saillard, a man terrible in anger, had made of Hautemare a very important, perhaps indeed the most important, person in the village of Carville. It might even be said that his reputation spread over the entire district of Avranches, where he did many people favors. Madame Hautemare, for her part, was haughty towards the peasants; she ruled her husband with an iron hand; if possible, she was even more pettily devout than he. To Lamiel she spoke only of her duties and sins.

I found Carville so thoroughly tedious when I was not killing the Duchess' hares that, in the evening, I gave all my attention to the lengthy details

I have just related somewhat at length myself. The reason why I dwell on all this so minutely is that these details absorbed the amiable Abbé Le Cloud and myself. An affection of the lungs, contracted through impassioned shouting in damp churches, kept him at the Château de Miossens for several months.

I am writing this in 1840. In 1818, I had the good fortune to possess one of those American uncles who provide our farces with stock characters. This man, whose name was des Perriers, passed for the black sheep of the family; I had written to him two or three times when I sent him books or clothes from Paris.

While Monsieur l'Abbé Le Cloud and I were being amused by the gravity of good old Hautemare and the terror the Curé du Saillard inspired in him, my American uncle took it into his head to die, leaving me a small fortune and a large lawsuit in Havana.

"There's a real profession for you!" said the amiable Abbé Le Cloud. "You can be plaintiff and planter."

I won my lawsuit in 1824; I led the paradisial life of a wealthy planter. But after five years, I felt the desire to play the rôle of a rich man in Paris; curiosity urged me to obtain news of Carville, of the Duchesse de Miossens and her son, of the Hautemares. All these adventures—for adventures there have been—centre about little Lamiel, the adopted child of the Hautemares. It amused me to note them and my whim has made a man of letters of me.

Farewell, then, kindly reader, of me you shall hear no more!

## III

## *The Washerwomen*

As you leave Carville, on the side of the sea, you have on your left a little valley through which runs the Houblon, that brook which is minded to be pretty. Two wide sloping meadows line either side of the brook.

On the left bank, a fine road, recently repaired by Madame de Miossens, displays its free-stones proudly; these, under a very impolite name, are designed to prevent the imprudent from falling into the swift brook which at this spot lies more than ten feet below the road-level. On Monsieur le Curé du Saillard's advice the noble lady herself turned contractor for the reparations to the road leading to the château; the expenses were quoted at one hundred crowns in the budget of the commune. Madame la Duchesse de Miossens a *contractor*, receiving three hundred francs from a *commune!* What ridiculous words in 1826, the date

of the beginning of this highly immoral tale of ours.

Ten minutes' walk along the Houblon from the bridge, a third meadow lies opposite, dominating the confluent of the Décise and the Houblon. The Décise flows down very swiftly indeed; a path winding in and out over the highest portion of this third meadow runs alongside. Gazing upward, the traveller's eye notes the last little sandy alleys of a very carefully kept English garden and above, the tops of rows of hedges, planned especially to cut off a view of the distant sea from the windows of the ground-floor of the château.

The black square stones of a Gothic tower form a fine contrast in color. This tower, now in ruins, was a noble contemporary of William the Conqueror.

Far below, at the bottom of the third hill is a public washing-place, laid out on the banks of the Décise, under an immense linden-tree. This basin, which Madame la Duchesse hopes to have condemned, is formed by two enormous oak-trunks hollowed in the centre and a few flat stones in a circle about it.

Some thirty women were doing their washing at this basin on the last day of September. Several of these plump peasants of opulent Normandy were scarcely working; they were there presumably to superintend their servants' washing, but in reality their purpose was to take part in the conversation, which, on that day, proved very animated. Several of the washerwomen were big, well-built women, fashioned on the lines of the Diana of the Tuileries; their faces, of a fine oval shape, might have passed for quite beautiful were they not topped by the horrible Norman cotton-bonnets whose brims, because the heads of the washerwomen were lowered, hung very far forward over their foreheads.

"Poor Mouton! He's carrying a double burden! There's not only Monsieur le Docteur to carry but his hump as well. And there's nothing light about his hump!"

All of them raised their heads and stopped working.

The rather singular object which attracted their attention was our friend Sansfin, a gun slung over

his hump. Indeed it would have been difficult for any young woman to see him pass and refrain from laughter.

The humpback grew very angry and showed it; this increased their hilarity. He was riding down the narrow path that followed the bank of the Décise; this brook formed a cascade and the path, supported by a number of stakes planted in the earth, wound in and out. It was down these zigzags that the luckless Doctor rode under the fire of thirty howling voices.

"Look out for your hump, Doctor! It may fall and roll all the way down hill and crush us poor washerwomen!"

"You scum of the earth! You vile scum!" breathed the Doctor through clenched teeth. "What unholy scum these people are! And to say that I never charge those scoundrels a sou when Providence avenges me by sending them some good disease.

"Hold your tongues, wenches!" the Doctor cried as he went down the zigzags slower than he would have wished. What a salvo of gaiety among

the washerwomen were his horse Mouton to slip!

"Hold your tongues, wenches, and go on with your washing!"

"Take care, Doctor, don't fall! If Mouton throws you, we'll all set to and steal your hump!"

"And I, what could I steal from you? Not your virtue at all events! That's been running the fields a long time now! You often have humps, too, but they're not on your backs!"

Another person appeared. The woman's appearance was superlatively prudish. She led a little girl of twelve or fourteen years of age by the hand; the child seemed to chafe at being so kept in leash. The woman was none other than Madame Hautemare, the wife of the beadle, choirmaster and schoolmaster of Carville; the little girl whose spirit she was curbing was her niece Lamiel.

Now the washerwomen were scandalized at the ladylike air Madame Hautemare affected. Imagine taking a little girl by the hand instead of allowing her to run free, like all the other little girls in the village! Madame Hautemare was coming from the château down the fine road

through the field on the right bank of the Houblon.

"Ah, there is *Madame* Hautemare!" cried the washerwomen. The very title was an insult.

But they knew La Hautemare would reply to them at length, whereas in a quarter of a minute the humpback Doctor could get away from them; moreover the Doctor, with his cool petulance, was better game. His horse Mouton had passed the last curve of the Décise and stood drinking at the brook, a little way above where the women were washing.

Two washerwomen shouted at Madame Hautemare:

"Ho there! hey! *Madame!* Take care you don't lose that daughter of your brother's, that so-called niece of yours!"

"Look out for your wig, little humpback, your hairdresser may not be able to dress it for you!"

"What about you?" the Doctor shouted; but his answer was of such a nature that it is impossible to reproduce it here.

The devout Madame Hautemare who had continued to follow the road which led from the Châ-

teau de Miossens past the washing-place, hastened to retrace her steps with her niece. This action, accompanied by the great air of disdain the beadle's wife affected, gave rise to a unanimous shout of jeering laughter around the basin.

The Doctor interrupted this burst of laughter. Forcing his little sharp voice, he cried:

"Hold your tongues, you blackguardly women, or else I'll ride my horse through the mud and your white bonnets and faces will be as clean as your consciences, covered with black mud and foul as your filthy persons."

As he uttered these noble words, the Doctor's face turned red as a beet. For he was wounded to the quick. Vanity engendered strange follies in a man who spent his life dreaming of his conduct; he was aware of his stupidities, of course, but rarely proved strong enough to resist them. At this moment, for instance, he need but hold his peace and all the insolent chatter of the washerwomen would evaporate at the expense of Madame Hautemare. But he longed for revenge.

"Well, if you do that," a washerwoman an-

swered, "we will be naughty women and a rascal will have covered us with mud. A little water and all will be right again. But what water can wash as disgusting a humpback as you are, a man who can't get a mistress without paying her?"

No sooner were the words uttered than the Doctor, losing his temper, pricked his horse to the gallop and rode through the mud near the washing-place, bespattering all these red cheeks, all these white bonnets and, worse, all the clean linen laid out on stone benches, with mud.

As one, the thirty washerwomen broke into insults; their hearty chorus lasted a full minute. The Doctor was delighted at having dirtied these insolent women.

"They'll have no cause to complain!" he added to himself, smiling diabolically.

He turned about to face the washerwomen and enjoy their discomfort: it was at this moment that all of them in chorus shouted their atrocious insults. The Doctor could not resist the temptation of passing through the mud again at a trot.

He urged his horse forward. One of the women,

who happened to be directly under the horse's snout, was horribly frightened and, at a long shot, threw the little wooden spade, with which she had been beating her linen, at the horse. This shovel, hurled by the hand of fear, rose higher than the horse's eyes and swerved a few inches past him. Mouton shied, then stood stock-still for a fraction of a second; then he took a little backward jump. His sudden precipitate motion served to separate the Doctor from his sadle; Sansfin, who had leant forward, fell flat in the mud, head first. The mud was a good half-foot deep; the only pains he suffered were of mortification, but his mortification was unalloyed.

He sprawled at the feet of the woman who, in the anguish of a danger that seemed to her extreme, had thrown the wooden spade. She thought the Doctor had broken an arm at least; all of them took to their heels lest the Doctor recognize them and name them in the complaint he would no doubt make.

Sansfin rose, swift as lightning, and jumped on his horse again. Seeing him remounting with such agility, the washerwomen, who had stopped twenty

paces away, began to laugh with a naturalness and an excess of happiness that brought the luckless physician's anger to boiling point. He seized his gun with tragic intent in his heart. But in his fall the gun had struck the ground hard, its barrels were filled with mud and had lost their flints, as well. The women did not know this accident had occurred to the gun; seeing the Doctor, with raised gun, taking aim at them, they took flight once more uttering shrill screams.

Sansfin seeing his gun powerless to avenge him dug his spurs deep into his horse's flanks; it was not long before the animal reached the courtyard of his house. Swearing like one possessed, without dismounting he called for a suit of clothes and a gun, then urged his horse forward at full canter on the highroad to Avranches, which passed over the bridge of the Houblon.

The women, having quickly washed their white bonnets, were busied with their linen, removing the clots of mud from it. For a good quarter of an hour, their conversation was restricted to inventing some means of vengeance on the Doctor; they

were angry at finding none when Madame Hautemare happened to pass by again, holding her niece Lamiel by the hand. At this sight, the women's cries changed objective:

"Hey, hey! There she goes again! Look at the old prude with her hoity-toity niece!" Pierrette shouted.

"Her niece? Who's her niece? You'd far better call her the Devil's daughter!"

"The Devil's daughter? Not at all. The child is a bastard she had before she was married and forced her silly fool of a husband to adopt, so as to cut off his poor nephew, Guillaume Hautemare."

"Eh, there, I beg you, neighbor, say nothing vulgar! At least show some consideration for the little girl with me."

This request expressed in a pontifical tone met with a dozen replies rising as one shout; but these I may not transcribe.

"Run home, Lamiel," cried Madame Hautemare.

The little girl set off, delighted to be able to run alone. The good woman then afforded herself the pleasure of addressing a sermon in three parts to

the washerwomen, when the latter, disconsolate at not being able to get the floor again, suddenly burst into shouting, in concert, hoping to drive Madame Hautemare away. But the intrepid woman bore their conversion at heart and continued to preach for more than five minutes to the accompaniment of the thirty women yelling at the top of their lungs.

By means of these two fine attacks levelled at recalcitrant passers-by, the washerwomen discovered the secret of cheating boredom all that day. For her part, Madame Hautemare had a long story to relate to her husband, the beadle, and to all her cronies in Carville. The least amused of them all was the Doctor who, instead of going home after having covered the washerwomen with mud, galloped towards the Houblon bridge, careless of his gun on its strap bouncing over his back in the most ridiculous fashion.

"Good heavens!" he said to himself, "I must be a great oaf to go and argue with those scoundrelly women! There are days when I should have myself strapped to my bed by my servant."

To clear his humor, the Doctor racked his brains for some patient, on the main road down which he was still galloping, who might believe the Doctor was paying him an evening call.

Suddenly he met someone far better than a patient, Monsieur du Saillard, the Curé of Carville, on his way to dine that evening at the Château de Saint Prix, three leagues away from his village. The cleric was implacable in his hatreds; he was also one of the bigwigs of the Congrégation; but in compensation—and what saves civilization in France is that there is a compensation for everything—in compensation then, the terrifying du Saillard did not relish driving on the highroad in his little cabriolet alone. He was therefore greatly pleased when he saw Sansfin arriving at the Saint-Prix's.

These two men might have done each other great harm; but they lived together diplomatically. At the Duchesse de Miossens' especially, du Saillard was mortally afraid of the malevolent anecdotes the Doctor related so well.

The Doctor escorted the Curé on horseback;

when he sat at home again alone, all his bitter memories of the afternoon returned to mortify him. But a moment later, a consolation came to him. He was called to the bedside of a handsome young man, five feet six in height and barely twenty-five years of age, who had just suffered nothing less than an apoplectic stroke. The Doctor spent the night by his bedside; while applying the proper treatment, he had the joy of seeing so handsome a creature die before daybreak.

"There is a fine body vacant," he mused, "why cannot my soul enter into it?"

It must be remembered that Sansfin had become a doctor so as to care for himself and a good hunter in order always to go armed among people who might poke fun at him. His reward for a double activity that often told on his sickly constitution was to see handsome men die and to frighten the scant number of pretty women-patients the country furnished.

When Madame Hautemare sent her back to the village, Lamiel was far too intelligent a child not to realize there was something very extraordinary

afoot. As a rule the devout Madame Hautemare never let her take twenty paces alone.

Her first thought, as was quite natural, was to listen to what her aunt sought to hide from her; all she need do was to make a detour and, retracing her steps, to hide in the ditch, thick with leaves, that stood above the public washing-place. But Lamiel expected to hear insults and vulgarity, which she abominated.

A far more exciting idea occurred to her.

"If I run very fast," she thought, "I can go up to the field where they dance (I've only managed to get there once in my life!), and I can get home before my aunt."

Carville consisted of practically a single very broad street, with a town square in the middle. At the end opposite the Houblon bridge, on the Paris side, stood the pretty Gothic church of the district; beyond lay the churchyard: still further along stood three tall lindens under which they danced on Sundays to the great displeasure of the Curé du Saillard. They profaned, he said, the ashes of the dead; in justification, he pointed out that the

lindens stood less than forty paces from the churchyard. The cottage which the community allotted to Monsieur Hautemare as schoolmaster gave onto the street, almost opposite the churchyard; the linden-path was clearly visible and the fiddling well within earshot.

Lamiel ran up an old road leading from the river to the Paris road which it joined a little beyond Carville. It passed by the linden-trees. From afar she could glimpse their leafy crests, rising high over the houses. Her heart beat more quickly. At last she would see them at close range, these lovely trees that beckoned in the distance.

As she ran along the old path from the village, Lamiel was unlucky enough to meet several old village-women bearing baskets filled with sabots.

Years ago, Madame Hautemare had been as poor as these old women and had done the same labor to earn her living; Monsieur le Curé du Saillard's protection had changed everything. These women who walked barefoot, carrying their sabots on their heads, soon perceived that Lamiel was clad much more carefully than usual; no doubt her

aunt Hautemare had taken her to the château to see Madame la Duchesse.

"Hey! hey! Look at her strutting like a peacock because she's been to the château!" said one of them.

"I don't know what is holding me back!" said another. "Why don't we take her fine shoes off her? Why shouldn't she walk barefoot as we all do?"

Lamiel did not lose courage; she went up into the field which stood several feet above the road; from there she returned insult for insult.

"You want to steal my fine shoes because there are five of you; but if you steal them from me, the constable, who is a friend of my uncle's, will put you in prison."

"Will you shut up, you little serpent, you Devil's daughter!"

At this word, the five women began to cry out together at the top of their lungs:

"Devil's daughter! Devil's daughter!"

"Very well, then," Lamiel answered, "if I am the Devil's daughter I shall never be an ugly scold like you; the Devil my father will know how to keep me happy!"

## IV

### *Mandrin and Cartouche*

By dint of saving, the Hautemares had managed to accumulate a capital that yielded eighteen pounds income. They were very happy indeed; but Lamiel, their pretty niece, was dying of boredom. Minds are precocious in Normandy. Although just turned twelve, Lamiel was already susceptible to boredom, and at that age, when boredom is unrelated to physical suffering, it announces the presence of intelligence.

Madame Hautemare considered the slightest amusement a sin. On Sundays, for instance, not only was one forbidden to watch the dancing under the tall lindens at the end of the churchyard, but it was even unlawful to sit at the door of the cottage from where one could hear the sounds of the fiddle and see a corner of that cursed dance which turned Monsieur le Curé's complexion yellow. La-

miel wept for very tedium; to calm her, her kindly aunt would give her sweetmeats; the little girl, who enjoyed them, could not entertain a dislike for their donor. For his part, the schoolmaster was eminently scrupulous in the performance of his professional duty: he forced her to read for an hour every morning and an hour every evening.

"If the commune pays me to teach all the children to read," he would say to himself, "how much more, then, must I teach my own niece, since, after God, I am the cause of her coming into this community?"

This continual reading was one of the child's greatest torments; but when the good schoolmaster saw her weeping, he would give her a coin to console her. In spite of the money, soon exchanged for little men of gingerbread, Lamiel abhorred reading.

One Sunday, when she could not run away and her aunt had forbidden her to look through the open doorway lest she catch sight of some headdress swaying in cadence to the dance, Lamiel

found the *Tale of the four brothers Aymon* on the bookshelf. The woodcuts delighted her; then, to understand them better, she cast her eyes, although with disgust, on the first page of the book. This page amused her; she forgot she had been forbidden to go and watch the dancing; presently, all she could think of was the four brothers Aymon. The book, confiscated by Hautemare from a smutty schoolboy, wrought incredible havoc in the soul of the little girl. Lamiel dreamed of these great heroes and their horse all evening, then all night long. Although utterly innocent, she thought it would be quite another story if she could go for a walk in the churchyard on the arm of one of the four brothers, instead of being held in check and prevented from dancing by her old uncle's tremulous arm. She read almost all the schoolmaster's books with a frenzied joy, though it was little indeed she understood in them. Yet she enjoyed to the utmost the dreams they conjured in her imagination. Because of the loves of Dido, for instance, she devoured an old translation in verse of Vergil's

*Ænead*, an ancient book bound in parchment, published in 1620. A tale of any sort was enough to delight her. When she had run through all the schoolmaster's books save those in Latin, and done her best to understand them, she took the oldest and ugliest to the village grocer. In exchange, he gave her a half-pound of raisins and the story of *Mandrin, the Famous Brigand*, and later, that of *Monsieur Cartouche*.

We must sorrowfully allow that these stories are not written with the highly virtuous and edifying tendencies which our moral century instills into everything. Obviously the French Academy and the Prix Montyon have had no traffic with this literature; indeed there is not a dull page in it. Soon Lamiel dreamed only of Monsieur Mandrin, Monsieur Cartouche and the other heroes these little books brought into her ken. The end of these tales always took place on a high site far over the heads of a great crowd of spectators; this seemed the noblest of conclusions. Did not the books themselves laud the energy and courage of their heroes?

One evening at supper, Lamiel was rash enough

to mention one of these great men to her uncle. He made the sign of the cross in horror:

"I should like you to realize, Lamiel," he cried, "that there are no great men except the saints."

"What ever can have put such terrible ideas in your head?" Madame Hautemare moaned.

Throughout the rest of supper, the old fellow and his wife conversed in their niece's presence about nothing else. At prayers which they held in common after supper, the schoolmaster went out of his way solemnly to implore Heaven that his niece be preserved from thinking of Mandrin and Cartouche.

Lamiel was very wide awake for her age, full of imagination and intelligence. This sort of expiatory ceremony made a deep impression upon her.

"Why does not my uncle wish me to admire them?" she wondered as she tossed sleeplessly on her bed. Then suddenly a highly reprehensible inspiration came to her:

"But would my uncle have given ten crowns, as Monsieur Cartouche did, to that poor widow Ren-

oart, when the revenue officers seized her black cow and she had but thirteen sous to live on, she and her seven children?"

For a long spell, Lamiel wept with pity. Then she thought:

"If he were on the scaffold, could my uncle bear the blows of the executioner's iron mace as it broke his arms without turning a hair, like Monsieur Mandrin? My uncle sets up an endless moaning when his gouty foot lands on a stone."

That night brought about a revolution in the little girl's mind. On the morrow she brought the grocer the old translation of Vergil with the pictures; she refused figs and grapes and received in exchange one of the fine stories she had been forbidden to read.

The morrow was a Friday. Madame Hautemare was in despair because that evening, as she rose from the table, she noticed that a certain earthen pot was empty and realized she had put into the soup the remains of Thursday's meat broth.

"Well, what does it matter?" Lamiel said thoughtlessly, "The soup we had tasted all the bet-

ter and anyhow what was left of the broth would probably have spoiled before Sunday."

Such horribly subversive notions naturally brought down a sound scolding on the child's head. Madame Hautemare had a bad temper; not knowing upon whom to vent it, she passed her anger, as they say in Carville, onto her young niece. Lamiel was sensible enough, however, not to resent this treatment at the hands of so kindly an aunt who provided her with sweetmeats. Besides, she saw Madame Hautemare was heartbroken at having eaten and caused them to eat the remains of this broth. This Friday supper became for Lamiel a subject for prolonged meditation. It filled her thoughts as long as a month after, when she heard La Merlin, the proprietress of the tavern, saying to a customer:

"They're good as gold, those Hautemares, but Lord! what stupid people!"

Now Lamiel nourished the tenderest esteem for La Merlin; she used to hear her laughing and singing all day long in her tavern, even on Fridays.

"That must be the answer to the riddle," cried

Lamiel as a great light fell upon her. "My people are stupid!"

For a week she did not utter ten words; she had found her way out of a maze of doubt thanks to the tavern-keeper's explanation.

"People do not tell me this," she reflected, "because I am too young. It's like Love, which they forbid me to speak about without ever explaining what it is."

Thereafter, all her aunt's preaching, in other words everything that meant duty or convention among the prudes of the village, became equally ridiculous in Lamiel's eyes. In a low voice, she would reply: "That is stupid!" to everything her aunt or uncle might tell her. To neglect telling her beads on the evening of a holy day, to eat meat on days of fasting or to go to the woods to make love seemed to Lamiel sins of like importance.

## V

### *Reader to the Duchess*

LAMIEL was fifteen years old when a few wrinkles began to show around the eyes of the Duchess. (We have forgotten to say that the old Duke died and his son survived him by only a few months.) This discovery plunged her in despair. A courier, despatched in all haste to Paris, returned with the most celebrated oculist in France, Monsieur de La Rouze. This intelligent man was very much embarrassed when he held a consultation that morning at the Duchess' bedside; he was forced to utter a long series of elegant phrases until he found time to invent a Greek word which meant weakening due to old age. Let us suppose this fine Greek word to be amorphosis: Monsieur de La Rouze explained at length to the Duchess that amorphosis sprang from a sudden cold in the head and attacked preferably young women between twenty and

twenty-five years of age. He prescribed a stern régime, gave the Duchess two boxes of pills with very different names but both composed of bread dough and colocynth, and advised his patient to be particularly careful not to consult ignorant doctors who might confuse this malady with another which exacted a weakening régime. He recommended that she give up reading for six months, especially in the evening; she must therefore engage a reader. But the Doctor arranged things so capably that it was the Duchess who first uttered the fatal word "reader" and another word still more dreadful: "spectacles." The oculist appeared to be meditating profoundly; finally he decided that for the duration of the treatment, from six to possibly eight months, it might be advisable to spare her eyes and to wear spectacles. He would himself select them them in Paris from a very learned optician whom the newspapers praised twice a week.

This charming specialist delighted the Duchess: he was a knight of all the orders of Europe, and, better, he was not more than forty years old. He therefore left for Paris with an extremely satis-

factory fee. But the Duchess was very much embarrassed on another score: where was she to find a reader in the country? For that sort of chambermaid is very difficult to find even in Normandy. In vain Mademoiselle Anselme published Madame la Duchesse's need throughout the village. Old Hautemare, the only man in the whole village who merited the epithet of *bonhomme,* first thought of his niece Lamiel in this connection.

"But," he mused, "nobody else in the village is capable of filling this post and the Duchess is too intelligent not to think of Lamiel."

There was, however, a major objection. Would a girl taken from the Foundlings' Home be worthy to serve as reader to a great lady of such exalted rank?

Hautemare and his wife had spent a fortnight plunged in the torment that usually attends a great idea in process of execution, when one evening, at the period when the most decisive news about the situation in Vendée was being printed, the postman delivered the latest number of the *Quotidienne* from Paris at the château.

In vain Mademoiselle Anselme put on a double pair of spectacles; she read so slowly and so unintelligently that the impatient Duchess was at her wits' end.

Mademoiselle Anselme was too clever to read well. She saw in this business of reading a new chore fallen to her lot without a sou's increase in wages. Her reasoning was correct; but Mademoiselle Anselme, the wiliest of women, proved to be in error. How many times, later, she was to curse the inspiration of her laziness!

Suddenly the Duchess interrupted this abominable reading:

"Lamiel! Let them harness the horses and send to the village for little Lamiel, Hautemare's daughter; her uncle or aunt can bring her up here."

Lamiel appeared two hours later in her Sunday clothes. At first she read badly but with charming graces that made the Duchess forget even her interest in the news from Vendée. Lamiel's fine brilliant eyes flashed with zeal as she read the enthusiastic phrases of the *Quotidienne*.

"The girl thinks right!" mused the Duchess.

And when, a little before eleven o'clock, Lamiel and her uncle took their leave of the great lady, the latter's vague whim had become almost an intention: she would attach Lamiel to her person.

Madame Hautemare, however, refused to entertain the idea. How could Lamiel, a big girl of fifteen, already emancipated in her ideas, come back alone from the château to her little house at nine or ten o'clock at night? Highly complicated negotiations resulted; they dragged on for more than three weeks. This delay was sufficient to change the Duchess' vague intent to have Lamiel at the château to read the *Quotidienne* into a passionate resolve.

After infinite discussions (that might have the virtue of depicting the Norman genius, such fine examples of which are to be met with in Paris, but that would run the risk of boring the kindly reader) it was agreed that Lamiel would sleep at the château in Mademoiselle Anselme's room. This room had the honor of adjoining that of Madame la Duchesse, a circumstance which quieted Madame Hautemare's scruples and, above all, her vanity,

yet did not fail to shock her in another sense.

"What!" she said to her husband when everything seemed concluded. "The gossips of Carville will say that our niece has gone into service? It will reawaken the hopes of your nephew the Jacobin who said such horrible things about us!"

This scruple was on the point of breaking off the affair. The Duchess, for her part, considered it a signal honor for the schoolmaster's niece to be admitted to the château and said as much to Madame Hautemare. Immediately the village gossip made a deep curtsey to the great lady and took leave of her without answering.

"There is the Revolution for you," cried the Duchess beside herself, "it is useless to imagine we can avoid it, the Revolution lies on every side; it even insinuates itself among the people whose fortunes we have built."

This reflection filled her with indignation, with grief and with fear. The very next day, after an almost sleepless night, the Duchess sent for the fellow Hautemare to call him roundly to account; but what was her amazement when she heard the

schoolmaster, nervously twirling his hat between his fingers in his fear of the terrible message he had been given, declare that, upon mature deliberation, they considered Lamiel's lungs were too delicate for her to accept the honor Madame la Duchesse had been kind enough to do her.

Her answer to this impertinent declaration was a quotation from *Béjazet;* it consisted in a single word:

"Away!"

The Duchess had wished to manage this affair without mentioning it to du Saillard, the Curé; his singular depth of understanding had given this talented ecclesiastic the unpardonable fault of sometimes letting a rather abrupt reply escape him when too absurd objections were being raised.

"Here again," said the Duchess, "is the sort of thing that was unheard of before 1789."

Whenever possible, she refrained from speaking to the Curé of serious things. Sometimes, indeed, Madame de Miossens tried to invite du Saillard to dinner and to address no more than two polite phrases to him, one when he arrived and one

when he left. This pretentiousness amused the intelligent cleric; he bided his time patiently until the Duchess had need of him. In her anger at the schoolmaster, the great lady sent for du Saillard immediately, nor was she clever enough to wait until the end of the meal before broaching the subject of Lamiel.

Du Saillard considered the affair had been so badly handled that he feared it was irremediable. Before mentioning Lamiel, some fault should have been found in Hautemare's conduct of the school, since here lay the root of his competence and his insolence. A threat might have been made to close his school; the school might have actually been closed, if necessary. Then Hautemare would have come to the château in abject humility to beg Madame la Duchesse to suffer Lamiel to be admitted. The Curé made the Duchess feel in all its bitterness the immense error she had commited by failing to ask his advice in the very beginning. Then he went away, having given her no counsel, leaving her to the harrowing despair of her vanity outraged by a boor.

Her extreme emotion robbed this great lady of what little sense she had in the conduct of affairs. She could not retain even a remnant of dignity, and Mademoiselle Anselme herself addressed an official letter to Monsieur Hautemare in which she told him, in the name of Madame, that Mademoiselle Lamiel would have the honor of being employed by Madame la Duchesse in the quality of reader until they could send to Paris for a person better qualified. The whole village was scandalized by the prefix Mademoiselle.

Lamiel was not entirely unaware of the efforts her uncle had been making for three weeks; she desired passionately to go to the château. She had caught glimpses of the fine furniture which filled the rooms; above all, she had seen a magnificent library and all the gilded volumes on its shelves. But she had forgotten to notice that these volumes happened to be in a case with glass doors and that the Duchess, being most suspicious, invariably carried its small key tied to her watch.

When she reached this beautiful château where she was to live, when she gazed at its lofty, severe

slate roof, shaped like a candle-snuffer, Lamiel felt such an extraordinary and violent sensation in her heart that she stopped short on the steps of the porch. Her soul was twenty years old and as a last counsel, her aunt, who had accompanied her to the very door but who was unwilling to enter lest she be forced to thank the Duchess, earnestly besought her never to laugh in front of the chambermaids nor indulge in the least pleasantry.

"Otherwise," Madame Hautemare added, "they will despise you for a peasant and heap little insults on you, such slight insults that you will be unable to complain of them to the Duchess, yet so cruel that at the end of several months you will be only too happy to leave this château."

These words proved fatal for Lamiel; all her happiness vanished at once. Complete discouragement fell upon her as she observed the faces of the women about the Duchess. After only three days, Lamiel was so unhappy that she had lost her appetite. The room she slept in had a fine carpet but she was not allowed to walk quickly over it; this would have been in bad taste; it would have displayed a

lack of respect for Madame. Everything had to be done slowly and sedately in this magnificent château since it had the honor of being a great lady's residence.

The Duchess' court was more particularly composed of eight women, the youngest of whom was easily fifty years old. Poitevin, the valet de chambre, was even older, as were the three sole lackeys privileged to enter in the long succession of rooms which occupied the first floor. There was a magnificent garden composed of alleys of lindens and of bushes severely trimmed three times a year. Two gardeners looked after the magnificent flower-beds which spread out under all the windows of the château.

From the second day on, it was decided that Lamiel might not go for a stroll, even on the lawn, unless accompanied by one of the Madame's chambermaids; these women always found it too damp or too cold to go out walking. As for life indoors, these women, almost all of whom laid claims to youth although they were over fifty, had discovered that the full light of day was in bad taste.

In fine, scarcely a month had passed yet Lamiel was dying of ennui; nor was her life enlivened by the copy of faithful *Quotidienne* which she read every evening to Madame. How different was Mandrin's life in the book she considered the most amusing in the world! She had forgotten to bring her books; when she drove over to spend a few moments with her relatives, she was not left alone and could not go to her hiding-place.

Lamiel no longer felt the least desire to go for a walk; she was so unhappy that her slight vanity, though awake, failed to notice her immense success with the Duchess. The quality that most won the great lady was that Lamiel did not look like a young miss of good family.

The reader must know that one of the disastrous effects of the Revolution to which Madame de Miossens was the most sensitive was the airs of decency and reserve affected by the daughters of people of the common classes who had earned some money. Lamiel had too much energy and vivacity to walk slowly and with eyes lowered, or at least so levelled as to let but an insignificant

glance at the magnificent carpet in the Duchess' salon escape her. The charitable warnings of the chambermaids had caused her to adopt a curious gait; she walked slowly, to be sure, but she looked like a chained gazelle; a thousand little impulsive movements betrayed her country habits. She had never been able to acquire that conventional social bearing which must suggest the ultimate effort of a nature whose ideal is never to make the slightest move. The moment she was not directly under the stern glance of some old chambermaid, she would frisk through the rooms leading to the Duchess' salon. Informed of it by talebearing chambermaids, the great lady had a mirror placed in a salon in order to watch this gaiety from her armchair. Although Lamiel was lightness itself, everything was so quiet in the vast château that the shaking of the furniture as she bounded along was everywhere audible. All the servants were much shocked at this behavior which, in the end, caused the fortune of the young villager. When the Duchess was sure that she had acquired a little girl who did not affect the airs of a lady, she gave her inclination for Lamiel

free play. Lamiel did not understand the meaning of half the words she read in the *Quotidienne*. The Duchess asseverated that, in order to read well, one must understand; she used this point to allow herself the pleasure of explaining to Lamiel everything mentioned in the *Quotidienne*. This turned out to be no small matter, and without the Duchess noticing it, her office of instruction every evening became an absorbing occupation: the reading of the *Quotidienne* lasted three hours instead of a half-hour. To the young Norman peasant, who was very intelligent yet as ignorant as could be desired, the great lady explained all that occurred in the world; in the end, these comments on the newspaper the postman brought every evening at eight were often protracted until midnight.

"What! midnight!" cried the Duchess gaily, "I would have thought it ten o'clock at the very latest! There's another evening spent pleasantly!"

The Duchess had a horror of going to bed early. Often her comment on the *Quotidienne* was resumed the following morning and at last, strange to relate, the Duchess, who was accustomed to re-

peat that the Normans had ruined France, declared that the commentary on the *Quotidienne* was not enough for the education of *la petite,* as Lamiel was called at the château. *La petite,* to acquit herself well of her duties as reader, had to understand thoroughly even the malevolent anecdotes about bankers' wives and other Liberal ladies who graced the *feuilletons* of the *Quotidienne. La petite* read aloud the *Evenings at the Château of Madame de Genlis* and then the most moral novels of that celebrated actress. Later the Duchess found Lamiel apt to understand the *Dictionnaire des Etiquettes,* the most profound work of the century. Everything that dealt with the difference and especially the delimitation in the ranks of society was particularly calculated to occupy the attention of a woman who had spent all her youth on the verge of becoming a Duchess. It was through a singular fatality that she had not reached this supreme rank, the idol of the woman of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, before the age of forty, when she no longer felt so eager, she said, to rank in Society. The misfortune attendant upon so lengthy a period

of expectancy had embittered a character by nature feeble and superstitious, for which everything collapsed with the freshness of youth. She might have found some consolation in the passionate attentions of some poor man attracted to the château; but a first misfortune of this kind met with such reprobation from her director of conscience that the Duchess reached the threshold of old age without sinning again, and this continual unhappiness ended by poisoning her mind with bitterness. There were moments when she felt the need of great anger.

When she first arrived in Normandy, the haughtiness of this Marquise who demanded to be treated like a Duchess appeared so singular to the ladies of the neighboring châteaux that soon the Château de Miossens was declared to be supremely dull. People only came against their will; if they still accepted the Duchess' dinner invitations, it was mostly for the delicacies of the season. One of the lordly habits the Duchess had kept was that of sending couriers to Paris for the first green peas, the first asparagus, and so forth. She realized

what the handsome and numerous châteaux of the neighborhood scarcely troubled to hide from her: that they came to see her only out of consideration for the couriers returning from Paris.

## VI

## *Sansfin and Saillard*

The alleged weakness of the Duchess' eyesight served this amiable lady as a pretext never to be without Lamiel, who had fallen sole heir to the important position of Dash, the dog, recently deceased.

A vulgar little peasant girl would have luxuriated in this kind of existence, but less than a year after she came, Lamiel had lost the last shreds of her youthful gaiety. Several months passed apathetically; then Lamiel fell seriously ill. From the very beginning of her illness, her condition was so critical that the Duchess made a virtue of necessity and called on Dr. Sansfin, who, for several years now, had come to the château only on New Year's Day. Afraid lest Sansfin sway the Duchess' mind and actually cure her alleged ophthalmia, du Saillard had induced the Duchess

to select Dr. Buirette from Mortain, a little town a few leagues from the château. In his boundless vanity, the humpback physician derived an immense enjoyment from this summons to the château; his prestige in the countryside was now complete. He determined to make a lasting impression. In his opinion, the Duchess was dying of ennui; during the first half of the visit, therefore, he acted excessively rudely, addressing the strangest remarks to this great lady who was so measured and choice in her speech.

Next he marvelled at the young girl's illness:

"Here is an extremely rare case *for Normandy*," he mused, "My diagnosis is ennui, and ennui in spite of the Duchess' fondling, the excellent cuisine, the choicest delicacies of the season, the luxurious setting of the château and so forth. This grows curious: I must therefore take care not to be dismissed. I have laid on the caustic of rudeness with sufficient effect, and anyhow, the woman may feel indisposed, she may faint, and I should be bored stiff here. No half-measures, Doctor! The greatest cruelty I can possibly imagine to serve

up to this noble lady who abominates me at present is to send the girl back to her relatives."

Sansfin suddenly reverted to his ordinary manner: if it did not mark him as a man of much distinction, at least he appeared reflective, overwhelmed with work and without leisure either to quell the fire of his thoughts or to polish his expressions.

He assumed the most dismal air:

"Madame la Duchesse, I am very sorry to have to prepare your mind for the saddest news in the world: this charming little lady is at death's door. I see only one possible means of delaying the ravages of her acute pulmonary affection. She must," he resumed his harsh air, "she must go back and live in the little room she slept in so long in the Hautemare cottage."

"Monsieur," cried the Duchess angrily, "you were not summoned to alter the routine of my household but to attempt to cure this child's ailment—if you can."

"I beg you to believe, Madame, in my deepest solicitude for your person," the Doctor replied

sardonically, "but in that case I advise you to send for Monsieur le Curé. Other patients, whose surroundings will permit me to cure them, require my time."

The Doctor went away refusing to listen to Mademoiselle Anselme, whom the Duchess sent after him. He could not bear, he said, to visit unhappiness upon so great a lady—and one so shapely!

"What boorishness! What a flouting of all the proprieties!" cried the Duchess outraged. "As though we had not paid this uncouth fellow for the second half-hour of consultation he might have given the child. Send for du Saillard."

The Curé appeared immediately. No words he could speak rang clear as Sansfin's: the very amenities of his office condemned him to suffer fools habitually and to forestall all possible criticism. His reply lasted five minutes by the clock. Such wordy argument might terrify the reader but it pleased the Duchess, who once more heard an idiom to which she was accustomed.

The Curé dwelled long on his anger against that fellow, whom, elsewhere, he invariably called

his good friend; at the end of a visit that lasted no less than one hour and a half, the Duchess had made up her mind to send a courier to Paris for a doctor.

The great objection to this step was that a doctor had never before been summoned from Paris to treat a servitor in the history of the Miossens household.

"May I suggest a very simple expedient, Madame la Duchesse? Why should not Madame la Duchesse summon this doctor for her own health? In point of fact, all this anxiety seems unfortunately to have aggravated Madame's ophthalmia."

"It will be quite plain to the women about me," replied the Duchess in the tone of a Roman mother, "that the Paris doctor is intended for Lamiel and not for me."

The doctor, summoned by courier, kept them waiting forty-eight hours before he condescended to put in an appearance. Monsieur Duchâteau was a sort of Lovelace of the Faubourg, still in the flush of youth and very dashing; he spoke much and to the point, but there was something so horribly

common in his deportment and speech that even the Duchess' chambermaids were outraged. Moreover, amid his everlasting chatter, even the chambermaids noticed that he scarcely deigned to spend five minutes on his diagnosis of Lamiel's malady; when they tried to tell him her symptoms, he declared he could dispense with the information and prescribed a precursory and ineffective treatment. His departure for Paris three days later was an immense relief to Madame de Miossens.

They sent to Mortain for the local doctor who was in correspondence with a chambermaid and feigned illness to avoid appearing. Then they sent for a doctor from Rouen, Monsieur Dervillers, who, in contrast to his Parisian colleague, possessed a most lugubrious manner and never uttered a word. He would not discuss the matter with the Duchess but he told the Curé that the little girl had six months to live and no more. This merciless sentence cut the Duchess to the quick; it deprived her of her only distraction in the world; her attachment for Lamiel was at its very height; she was plunged in despair and often repeated she

would gladly give a hundred thousand francs to anyone who could cure Lamiel. Her coachman, hearing this, said with the brusque frankness of an Alsatian:

"Well then, let Madame call in Sansfin again."

One day, as she drove sadly home from Mass, she saw the humpback doctor some distance away down the main street of Carville. Instinctively she called him. He had thought of an evil trick; he therefore ran up to the carriage with the utmost cordiality. At the Duchess' invitation he climbed in. When he reached the patient's bedside, he declared her condition horribly aggravated and prescribed remedies which merely increased the ailments she suffered from. This blackguardly ruse met with a success that delighted him. The Duchess herself fell ill; and since, despite her selfishness (apparently brutal yet in reality to be attributed solely to her pride), she was at bottom kind-hearted, she reproached herself bitterly for having forbidden Lamiel's transference to the Hautemare home. This was duly carried out and

the humpback physician said to himself: "*I* shall be the remedy for Lamiel's ills."

He undertook to amuse the sick woman, painting life to her in glowing colors. No possible means was neglected; for instance he subscribed to the *Gazette of the Courts* which was read to Lamiel every morning. Crime interested her; she reacted with sympathy to the impermeable will of certain criminals. In less than a fortnight Lamiel's extreme pallor appeared to be diminishing. One day the Duchess noticed it.

"Well, Madame," cried Sansfin proudly, "is it right to send to Paris for physicians when you have a Dr. Sansfin at hand? A curé may be intelligent but when his intelligence is marred by envy, intelligence and folly are like as two peas! Sansfin can see the truth everywhere. I must confess, however, that the sciences I study in my attempt to master my art leave me so little leisure that sometimes I speak the truth in terms that are too frank and too exact; alas, I know that the elegance of the gilded salon shudders at this plain language from an

upright man who need curry favor with no one. You were selfish; unwilling to give up a chambermaid who amuses you, you at first refused to allow Lamiel to be transferred to her relatives'. Thereby, you jeopardized her life. It is not my place to tell you what judgment religion may pass upon such behavior. If Monsieur le Curé du Saillard dared fulfill his duties towards a woman of your rank, his severity would perhaps prove even more offensive than mine. But he cares little for the loss of his patients' souls. The death of the soul is not quite the same as the death of the body; his job is easier than mine. As for the remedies prescribed by your fool from Paris and that doctor from Rouen, they brought the little one to death's door. Give me the lie if I err. I tell you I possess such humanity and so fervent a love for my profession that if one of those idiotic old women you fill your château with had allowed me, I would have found my way secretly to the interesting patient's bedside and substituted the proper antidotes to the poisons your charlatan from Paris fed her. But I could not do this. Mark my words,

Madame, I would have run the risk of criminal proceedings in order to save a little girl in whom you take pleasure. That, Madame la Duchesse, is how stupidity, even in a case that seems quite simple, can bring about death. For a week, I managed to get news of the little lady day and night. She was dying; at any moment she might have been seized by a fit of vomiting and, coughing out her bloody lungs, died in your arms. Had it been granted her to know the truth, she might well have said to you, in that supreme moment: 'Madame la Duchesse, you have killed me; you sacrificed my life to your distaste for the plain noble language of Truth; Truth shocked you, because it happened to fall from the lips of a humble country doctor.' "

The Duchess was crushed by the Doctor's words; she believed it was a prophet she heard; she had managed her life so clumsily that, for a long time now, nobody bothered to speak eloquently and shake her out of her boredom. She had allowed life to go by as in the days when her beauty and charm filled her salon.

The Doctor aggravated the great lady's indispo-

sition at pleasure; he made her mad with pain; for an entire hour, day after day, he submitted her to the horrible spell of his diabolical oratory. The Duchess was so indisposed that she no longer had strength enough to visit Lamiel twice a day at the Hautemares'. Then, thanks to the Doctor who sought to cure her of her languor, her folly reached such a point that she allowed it to persuade her to leave the château and publicly to spend several days in the cottage next to the Hautemares', the Doctor having had it cleared and furnished in a few hours. Sansfin's zeal was increased by the knowledge that du Saillard was furious and used all his genius searching for some means of getting rid of the humpback physician. The Doctor's system of defence was very easy. Everyone in Carville was afraid of the Curé. Sansfin, by dint of repeating it over and over again two or three hundred times to everybody, made the Duchess and the village believe that the Curé was jealous of him because he had saved little Lamiel's life when the Curé had wished to send to Paris for a doctor. Once properly explained, the circumstance became

so clear that the entire village swallowed the anecdote (in the idiom of the commercial traveller) and du Saillard's great agitation was no longer a mystery. The doctor left no stone unturned to bring the truth home to the curés of the neighborhood; they, in turn, were delighted to have grounds for finding fault with the relentless Curé of Carville whose duty it was to keep an eye on them.

## VII

### *Lamiel's Illness*

The Doctor said to himself: "I must achieve two things. First, Lamiel: she is almost seventeen, and when I have initiated her, she will make a charming mistress. I must win her love. Next, the Duchess: although she is fifty-two, she is still quite handsome and her features are excellent. I must make myself so essential to the great lady that, after a struggle of a few months or a year, she will wish to enter upon a left-handed marriage with the country-doctor so ill-favored of Nature."

The Duchess sought his advice on everything. Since she had begun to see Sansfin every day, and, indeed, several times a day, her boredom had vanished.

Amid the agitation in which the Doctor maintained her mind, she told people right and left that she had discovered happiness the day she settled down in a cottage.

"I would be perfectly content," she would add, "if I were certain about Lamiel's health."

Under these circumstances, Sansfin averred that the apothecary of Avranches would never be able to prepare certain pills necessary to give his young patient strength. He went away to Rouen for several days; for the last few months he had been conducting a rather thorough correspondence with Monsieur Gigard, the Vicar-General and confidant of the Cardinal Archbishop. Once in Rouen, judging it necessary to win over the Vicar-General completely, he intrigued and manœuvred so adroitly that the latter suggested Sansfin make a general confession to himself in person; finally the humpback reached the true goal of his journey: he was presented to Monsieur le Cardinal. He played his cards with such skill, he gave proof of such intelligence and moderation, he heaped such perfidious praise on Monsieur le Curé du Saillard, who had not been to Rouen for the last eighteen months, that, when he left the capital, the Cardinal would rather have listened to a denunciation of du Saillard from Sansfin's lips, than conversely.

Having made this point, the local doctor saw the possibility of marrying a country widow of the highest nobility, who legally possessed more than eighty thousand pounds income, and actually, having but one son, aged seventeen, a student at the École Polytechnique, could expend nearly two hundred thousand francs per year.

"I shall hold this lad in the palm of my hand; I shall make him adore me," Sansfin mused, as he walked alone up the Colline de Sainte-Catherine, a hill which dominates Rouen. "And in any case if the worst comes to the worst, what is to prevent me from escaping to America with a hundred thousand francs in my pocket? There, under some assumed name—as Monsieur Petit or Monsieur Pierre Durand,—I could take up a medical career. Besides, I should have managed things so well when I took my hundred or two hundred thousand francs, that the Duchess and her son would cover themselves with ridicule if they sought to prosecute me."

Sansfin returned to Carville. Lamiel's cure progressed very rapidly and Madame de Miossens be-

gan to think of returning to the château; Sansfin fell back on drugs which heightened the symptoms of Lamiel's indisposition.

At this stage of affairs, Sansfin went out shooting in the Forest of Imberville; one day, instead of shooting, he fell into a profound rêverie.

"Very well, so be it!" he said sitting down on the exposed roots of a beech-tree. "Here I am, married to this duchess; I have a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds income at my disposal; yet my position remains unchanged. I have merely coated the pill; I am still an inferior being, I must cringe to people more powerful than myself, and forever fight against contempt, and, what is more, a contempt I feel I deserve. Let us follow the second plan. Transplanted in America, if I like I can call myself—Monsieur de Surgeaire; I have two hundred thousand francs in my pocket. But what does it all amount to? I have improved my position; but I have the burden of my thievishness to add to my hump. This hump makes me recognizable everywhere; in view of the infamous liberty of the press that reigns in America, what could I

do if some fine morning I read my whole story in the newspapers? No, I am weary of imposture; I need legitimacy and reality. Money is no good to me save as a luxury: to be sure a fine coach would prevent people from seeing my defect of Nature, but so far as I am personally concerned, I need no more than ten thousand francs."

After four hours of feverish agitation, the doctor emerged from the Forest of Imberville and returned to Carville resolved to make of the Duchess no more than an intimate friend and certainly not a wife under any circumstances. This one knavery less to perform made him quite happy. A week later, he was saying to himself:

"Good Heavens! how wrong I was to think of saddling myself with one more imposture. I would do much better to develop my natural qualities. If Nature has given me a sorry exterior, at least I know how to handle words and make myself master of the opinion of fools, and even"—he added with a smile of satisfaction—"of people of intelligence, for, after all, this Duchess is not ill-endowed in that respect; she has admirable tact in

the matter of ridicule and affectation, only she fails to reason, like all those of her class. Since reasoning does not admit of pleasantries, it seems to her to be horribly sad; when, by chance, she wishes to reason and reach a conclusion I do not favor, I can always destroy all her reasoning with one mordant witticism. As for me, I am not afraid of work; to become a deputy, I would have to study a little political economy and read the titles of some hundreds of administrative ordinances—well, what is that compared to studying three or four diseases? When I make my maiden speech, my hump will save me from the jealousy of my colleagues. What is the good of escaping to America? My country offers me a post that suits me; Madame de Miossens must have an important salon in Paris; that salon must sponsor me in society. Through the Cardinal Archbishop, I can have myself endorsed by the Congrégation. Having prepared two such splendid openings, the door stands before me; I can turn the knob and enter, if my grip proves strong enough. In the meanwhile, I must amuse myself; while I am working towards

this great goal, I must cull the first sweet fruits of this young girl's heart."

To further his progress towards these delights, Sansfin drew out Lamiel's spurious illness over several months. Since the slight real cause of her very simple ailment was boredom, Sansfin sacrificed everything to his desire to amuse the patient; but he was amazed at the clarity and vigor of so youthful a mind; he found it difficult indeed to deceive her. Soon Lamiel was convinced that this poor doctor with his burlesque face was the only friend she had in the world. In almost no time, by well-calculated jests, Sansfin managed to destroy all the affection Lamiel cherished in her kindly heart for her uncle and aunt.

"Every principle you believe, every fact you hear to-day, every force that lends you such charm is ruined by a reflection of all the poverties Hautemare (worthy man!) and his wife have offered you as respectable truths. Nature has endowed you with charm, grace and a sort of gaiety which unknown to you communicates itself to those who have the pleasure of hearing you. Observe the

Duchess; she has not one ounce of common sense, yet were she still pretty she might pass for an attractive woman. Well, you have won her over so completely that there is no sacrifice she would not make cheerfully if it meant preserving the pleasure she gets from spending an evening with you. But your position is dangerous: you must look out for the blackest plots on the part of the chambermaids; Mademoiselle Anselme, especially, pales at the sound of the slightest word in praise of you. Monsieur l'Abbé du Saillard is accustomed to succeed in everything he undertakes; if he joins forces with the chambermaids, you are lost, for you possess all graces possible, but, being young, you still lack sound common sense; you do not know how to reason. In that respect, I might perhaps stand you in good stead; but any day now your illness will be over; then I shall have no further excuse to see you and you are liable to fall into the gravest of errors. If I were you, I should prefer to acquire common sense; it only means a month or two of work."

"Why not come to the point? Why this preface

lasting a quarter of an hour? Ever since you began talking, I have been curious to discover your purpose."

Sansfin laughed. "I want you to agree to a horrible murder. In the pocket of my hunting-coat (it's from Staub's, the fashionable tailor) I shall bring you a live bird. Then I shall cut its head off, and you will pour the blood on a little sponge and hold it in your mouth. Have you the courage to do this? For my part, I doubt it."

"What then?" asked Lamiel.

"Then," the doctor continued, "when you are with the Duchess, you will spit the blood out from time to time. Your lungs being so gravely attacked, no one will make any objection to anything I want done for your amusement. I have told you already that your illness leads to marasmus; nothing is more dangerous for a girl of your age, but the root of your illness was pure boredom."

"But you, Doctor, are you not afraid of boring me while teaching me what you call common sense?"

"No, because what I am demanding of you is

work, and, as soon as you are successful, work gives you pleasure and dispels your boredom. Imagine: there is not one single solitary fact among all those a comely girl of Lower Normandy believes that is not more or less stupid or erroneous. What does that ivy do to the finest oak-trees yonder in the avenue?"

"The ivy clings tightly to one side of the trunk, then it follows the principal branches."

"Very well, then," the Doctor asseverated, "the natural intelligence with which Fortune endowed you is the fine oak-tree; but, while you were growing up, the Hautemares told you twelve or fifteen imbecilities (which they themselves believed). These imbecilities clung about your finest thoughts, just as that ivy clings to the oak-trees in the avenue. Then I appear to cut the ivy away and clean the tree. When I leave this room, you will see me get off my horse and cut the ivy off the twenty trees on the left. This is my first given lesson; we shall call it the Rule of the Ivy. Write that word on the first page of your Book of Hours: every time you surprise yourself believing something written in that

Book, say the word 'ivy' to yourself. In the end you will have succeeded in discovering that not one idea you believe in now but contains a lie."

"What!" said Lamiel laughing, "then when I say that Avranches is three and a half leagues from here, I am telling a lie! Ah, my poor Doctor, what nonsense you are talking. Thank Heavens you are amusing!"

The Doctor's master-stroke had been to give this light tone to his conversations with his pretty patient; he had thought that the serious air she was compelled to maintain with the Duchess would always make her moments with him infinitely more agreeable to her.

"And," he mused, "even if some one of those infamous abhorrent young men to whom Nature has granted a body without blemish should some fine day chance to speak of love to my little jewel, her ironic tone will frighten the oafish lover and I shall have every opportunity to cover him with ridicule in Lamiel's eyes."

Although the blood of the poor little bird the Doctor brought at first inspired her with a great

repugnance, he nevertheless succeeded in making her place in her mouth the little blood-soaked sponge. What is more, by the tone of voice he affected, he gave Lamiel not the conviction, but, better still, the sensation that she was committing a great crime; he made her swear terrible oaths, repeating them after him, in which she bound herself never to reveal he had advised bird's blood. The thought of the death he dealt the charming little creature moved the young girl deeply; she hid her eyes in her handkerchief to avoid seeing the crime enacted. The Doctor felt an exquisite joy as he observed the poignant emotions he was exciting in this pretty girl.

"She will be mine," he promised himself.

His whole being was filled with happiness at having reduced Lamiel to a state of complicity. Had he involved her in the very greatest of crimes, she would have been no less his accomplice. He had dug a path in that youthful mind; that was the essential. A second and no less important advantage he had gained by his use of terror was that she was about to acquire the habit of discretion.

The amazing success attendant upon the bird's death intensified the formation of this habit. As soon as the Duchess was convinced her young favorite sometimes spat blood, Lamiel's strangest whims became sacred law to her; no one was allowed to make the slightest objections to anything Lamiel might purpose. To increase his sway still further, the Doctor, who greatly feared du Saillard's genius, did not fail to inveigh cruelly against the Duchess.

"Those young lungs have been inflamed for a long time," he would often repeat, "perhaps they have been forever ruined by the excessive reading aloud which the position Lamiel has the honor of holding at your side forced upon her."

He spared no detail calculated to cause his new friend acute remorse, to which every day the Duchess found something to object; yet this remorse formed a new link in the intimacy between the country doctor and the great lady, to such a point that the Doctor thought:

"Since I have no intention of marrying her, I can speak of love to her."

In the beginning, of course, it was a question of platonic love, no more; Sansfin always employed this ruse to divert the attention of the woman he planned to seduce and make her forget his horrible disfigurement.

It was precisely this misfortune which, from infancy, schooled him to attach extreme importance to the merest detail. Ever since he was eight years old, his incredible vanity had taken offence at a half-smile he might glimpse across the street as he passed by.

Feigning an extreme sensitiveness to chill, the doctor had adopted the habit of wearing magnificent coats and furs of all sorts; he imagined they concealed his disfigurement, whereas all this material, laid upon his already too-prominent shoulders, served only to emphasize his hump. In September at the very first hint of coolness in the evening air, from across the village-square, Sansfin noticed with grateful heart the first man of good company in Carville who had decided to put on a coat. Immediately he ran home and said to all the patients he called on that evening:

"I have put on my coat; I followed Monsieur So and So's good example. Nothing is more dangerous than the chill in the late summer air. You may have perspired without noticing it during the daytime, the cool evening atmosphere may bring humors from this perspiration to bear on the lungs: many a case of tuberculosis has been brought on by this and nothing else."

This habit of the Doctor's was of great service to him with women.

His first step was to isolate them, alleging illness; by this simple means, he plunged them into boredom; then he amused them by a thousand little attentions and sometimes succeeded in making them forget his strange deformity. To satisfy his vanity, he had formed the salutary habit of ignoring his defeats and reckoning his successes alone.

"Built as I am," he had said to himself early in his career, "out of one hundred women I attack, I can count on no more than two surrenders."

He grieved only when he found himself falling below this proportion.

## VIII

## *A Party in the Tower*

By persuading Lamiel to express her unwillingness to return to the château, a task he found none too difficult, Sansfin stirred the Duchess to action. She had bought a garden adjoining the Hautemare cottage; on this plot she proceeded to build a square tower each floor of which consisted of a magnificent bedroom and dressing-room. The Duchess' chief motive in indulging such costly whims was her wish to show the villagers of Carville, who were all too corrupted by Jacobinism, a real medieval tower, which could not fail to remind them what the lords of Miossens had meant to them in the past. The tower, erected on the garden-lot, was an exact copy of a half-ruined tower which stood in the park of the château. The doctor was able to overrule what objections the Duchess' avarice inevitably raised by pointing out that the square stone blocks

of the old tower could be used for the new. When the tower was erected, he noticed that the country masons had not set up the stone blocks in perfect alignment: stone-cutters were therefore summoned from Paris. By cutting the blocks as deep as six inches in some places they surrounded the tower with ogival ornaments, borrowed from Saracen architecture of which there are so many fine remains in Spain. At this period in the life of the new tower, it made an immense effect upon all the châteaux of the neighborhood.

"It is at once useful and agreeable," said the Marquis de La Fernozière, "in the event of a Jacobin uprising, you could take refuge in a tower of this sort and hold on quite comfortably for a week or ten days, until the gendarmerie of the district was mustered. In the piping times of peace, the sight of so beautiful a monument recalls the manors of the neighborhood."

The Doctor managed to have this idea repeated twenty times in the Duchess' hearing in less than a fortnight. Her happiness was complete. Her lack of success among the châteaux of the neighborhood

was one of the sorrows of her life. The ennui she had suffered before Lamiel's illness increased the more or less genuine grief which she thought dogged her life; invariably when she was out driving and one of these neighboring châteaux loomed on the horizon, she uttered a little cry of abject pain. The Doctor had not failed to make her confess what caused this cry; he had suggested it might perhaps be the symptom of some terrible pulmonary affection. For more than a month before, he imagined the ecstasy with which Madame de Miossens greeted the success of the tower. The passion he had found most difficult to combat was her avarice. He wanted to deal it a critical blow, and, having prepared the ground thoroughly, one day he cried with an air of deepest conviction:

"You must agree, Madame, about a very happy circumstance; this tower cost you fifty or at most fifty-five thousand francs—well, it has brought you more than one hundred thousand francs' worth of happiness! The vanity of the petty country nobles about you is at last overcome; they pay homage to the high estate to which Providence has been

pleased to call you. Do you for your part now deign to invite them to a banquet you will give to christen the Tour d'Albret. (The tower was named in honor of the Marshal.)

For several months Sansfin had been scheming to reconcile the nobility of the district with the Duchess' somewhat singular humor. He spread the notion throughout the châteaux that this so-called haughtiness that had shocked them was not truly haughtiness; rather it was simply an unfortunate mental habit she had acquired in Paris, and she herself was beginning to observe how ridiculous it was.

The Duchess gave a superb banquet to dedicate the Tour d'Albret. There were five floors; the Doctor set up five tables, one to each floor. A wooden shed was put up ten paces from the tower to serve as a kitchen; tables were placed in a meadow nearby and the parents of Hautemare's pupils were invited. The curious division of the noble company into five tables naturally gave rise to great gaiety, which grew apace at the genuinely cordial tone the Duchess used for the first time in her life as she

returned her guests' compliments. This change was wholly the work of Sansfin.

He sent for musicians who appeared as though by chance at nightfall, just as all the young women at the five tables were beginning to regret that no one had thought of ending so delightful a day with a dance. Sansfin returned on the run and announced that it had occurred to Madame la Duchesse to stop a troupe of musicians bound for Bayeux.

The trees in the meadows happened to be illumined, as though fortuitously: the peasant-girls began to dance. The highest salon in the tower, on the fifth floor, was reserved for the ladies; here they were to make the changes in toilette occasioned by this impromptu dance. During the half-hour they consecrated to this office, Dr. Sansfin was busy explaining to the gentlemen of the neighborhood how, without anyone having though of it particularly, this Tour d'Albert happened to be a fortress very difficult of capture.

"Your ancestors, gentlemen, knew the science of war from the ground up: as the masons strictly followed the plan of the old tower, without realizing

they were forging chains for the lower classes, they built a fortress which may serve as a refuge to all true men if ever the Jacobins start burning the châteaux again."

This comforting notion crowned the day's delights. The ladies danced from eight o'clock until midnight; it did not occur to their husbands, who were busy examining the tower, to have their horses harnessed until very late in the evening. The peasants danced until daybreak. The Doctor had ridden away and ordered barrels of beer and even of wine to be brought to the meadow. This day completely altered the Duchess' attitude toward the neighboring gentry; incidentally, it was also at this period that she completely forgot the barbarous treatment Nature had meted out to that amiable gentleman, Dr. Sansfin.

Lamiel watched the entire fête from the Duchess' carriage; it was then drawn into the middle of the meadow and its windows lowered. The Duchess came up at least twenty times to make sure that her favorite was not troubled by damp evening

air. Her avarice, hitherto a dominant passion, was utterly subjugated.

A week after this famous fête in the Tour d'Albret, which made history in the district of Bayeux, a large van from Paris was seen driving through Carville. It was filled with workmen, decorators and materials of every kind calculated to furnish a château. These men furnished the five flights of rooms in the Gothic tower admirably. The Duchess, rid of her avarice, found her heart empty; she was falling into a love of excess and already laying plans for a second dinner.

The room on the second floor, intended for Lamiel, was charmingly arranged; Lamiel told the Doctor she wished to live there. In vain he pleaded with her on bended knees to listen to him and to consider that this room (such a damp room!) would make a person with the constitution of a peasant sick, let alone someone like Lamiel, whose health was that of a woman of society. The girl was adamant. Sansfin bethought himself that for five months now her budding vanity was forever

learning something new from him; the Doctor was always right; Lamiel's intelligence was always inferior to the Doctor's. His prudence urged him to make several experiments; but in the end he was sure of the true principle of the child's whim.

"Vanity already! Already the pride of her sex!" he thought.

"I must give way at once or I shall sow the seed of an aversion here which may spread over the fair years of this charming girl's life at that period when to conquer her will be very pleasant indeed for a poor cripple like myself. . . ."

## IX

## *The Abbé and Lamiel's Education*

At about this time, the Curé of a little village near the Château de Miossens died, and on the Duchess' recommendation, the Archbishop of Rouen gave this little living to Monsieur l'Abbé Clément, the nephew of Mademoiselle Anselme, governess of the château and omnipotent before Lamiel's arrival. This young priest was very pale, very pious and very learned; he was tall, thin and more than half consumptive, but he had a bitter failing for his profession and he realized that, in spite of himself and his sickly body, he was very intelligent. Soon, in spite of his lowly origin, through his intelligence which always made him elect to take the better of two courses, he became the essential person in Madame Miossens' salon. At first he had been given to understand none too ceremoniously that if, at the age of twenty-four, he had been appointed Curé of a living worth at least

one hundred and fifty francs, it was because a boundless zeal was expected of him. The Duchess brought the young Curé to the cottage where Lamiel lived. He was struck by her grace, by the combination of an alert, bold, superior mind with a virtually complete ignorance of all the facts of life and an utterly naïve soul.

One evening as the Duchess was climbing into her carriage with the Abbé Clément on their way to spend the evening in the Hautemare cottage, an enormous case was delivered from the Paris diligence. The Abbé was kind enough to open it. It contained a magnificent portrait: the frame alone must have cost several thousand francs. The subject was Fédor de Miossens, the Duchess' only son, wearing the uniform of the École Polytechnique. The Duchess had the landau opened in spite of her terror of the night air. She wished to show the portrait to her charming Lamiel: curiously enough she did not dare abandon herself to her delight before hearing the opinion of the friend who governed her heart. Having reached Lamiel's room, the Duchess launched into the most exaggerated

praise, but her glance questioned her favorite who, for her part, barely replied. After a thousand turns of speech that called for an answer, the Duchess, impatient, was forced to ask Lamiel outright what she thought of the portrait. Lamiel admired the details of the frame; at the Duchess' express request, she considered the painted personage but absent-mindedly. Then she said simply and quite without malice that the young soldier's face seemed to her insignificant. In spite of the Abbé Clément's unassuming manner and his usual restraint, such naïveté was too unexpected for the slight experience of the world he had as yet acquired. He burst out laughing, and the Duchess, unwilling to lose her temper or to vex her favorite, decided to imitate him. This chaming naïveté astonished and delighted the poor Abbé Clément, who already felt himself stifling at the tone of falsity required of him at every moment in this little tower. Without realizing it, the luckless Abbé fell in love with Lamiel.

This was precisely when Lamiel wished at all costs to take possession of her room in the tower. One fine morning, she suddenly changed her mind;

Dr. Sansfin was amazed when, as he paid his first morning visit at eight o'clock, the Hautemares told him that Lamiel had set off for the château in Madame's coupé at least an hour before.

The favorite's return plunged the Duchess into a childlike joy; to be quite fair, we must confess that she would have been equally delighted at any singular action of Lamiel's. Since the Duchess had turned her hand to something, she no longer spent all her time bemoaning the progress of Jacobinism; she recovered her brilliant health and, far more important in her sight, not only were the first wrinkles which had invaded her brow disappearing but her complexion was daily losing that yellowish tint which invariably attacks a perpetual malcontent. In the evening, as he entered the salon, the Doctor was immensely surprised to hear laughter in the second salon from the one in which the Duchess was sitting: it was Lamiel repeating the English they had been teaching her for the last hour. The Duchess who had spent twenty years of her youth in England as an émigrée, imagined she spoke English; it had occurred to the Abbé Clément, who was

born at Boulogne-sur-Mer and spoke English and French with equal fluency, to teach Lamiel English, so that when she reassumed her duties as reader she might read the novels of Walter Scott to the Duchess. The Doctor saw he was lost; and, since he considered it axiomatic that a melancholy humpback who betrays his melancholy is a man forever ruined in a salon where he has committed this imprudence, he made off in haste and nobody noticed his disappearance.

The kindly Abbé Clément, far from confessing to himself the nature of his interest in Lamiel, thought of her constantly. He supposed that, in time, with the important protection of the Duchess, she would bring off a marriage calculated to place her in the ranks of the comfortable bourgeoisie. He therefore taught Lamiel a few things unfamiliar to her yet essential unless she were to appear ridiculous in good society: a smattering of history, a little literature, and so forth. This instruction was very different from that which Dr. Sansfin had given her. It was not harsh and trenchant; it did not revert to the principle of things like Sansfin's;

it was gentle, insinuating, filled with grace: always a pretty little anecdote paved the way for the deftest of maxims based upon it, the young instructor taking infinite pains to enable his young pupil to draw that conclusion for herself. Often Lamiel would fall into a profound rêverie which the Abbé could not account for: this occurred when one of the Abbé's teachings seemed to contradict some one of the Doctor's terrible maxims. According to the Doctor, for instance, the world was but a sorry comedy, gracelessly interpreted by a cast of grotesque scoundrelly women and infamous lying men. Take the Duchess for example. She did not believe a single word she said; her only care was to sow maxims useful to a Duchess' pretentions. Another example: feminine good conduct carried with it this danger: a woman overconfident in the strength of a pure conscience and an obvious virtue allowed herself rash actions of which a wise enemy might often take advantage; while on the other hand, the woman who followed the dictates of every whim tasted the pleasure of amusing herself from the very outset. That, said the Doctor,

was the only thing that mattered in the world.

"How many young girls do not die before twenty-three!" he would say to Lamiel, "and then, what is the good of all the shackles they forged and the pleasures they denied themselves for the sole purpose of winning the approbation of eight or ten silly old women who form the élite of the village!

"It occurs to me that several of these old women enjoyed the laxity of morals that prevailed in France before Napoleon. They must indeed laugh in their inmost soul at the atrocious hindrances they impose upon young girls aged sixteen in 1820. There is thus a double advantage to gain by heeding the voice of Nature and following all your desires. In the first place, you give yourself pleasure, which happens to be the only reason for which the human race was placed here below. In the second place, the soul, gathering strength from its true element, pleasure, has the courage to dispense with all the little comedies a young girl must play to win the approbation of the old women of standing in the village or community in which she lives. The danger in the doctrine of pleasure is that men's

pleasure incites them to brag endlessly about the favors women may have shown them. There is an easy and amusing remedy: always plunge the man who has served your pleasures into despair."

The Doctor added a fund of details:

"Never write. Or, if you must indulge that weakness, never give a second letter without having had the first one returned to you. Never trust a woman unless you have a means at hand of punishing her for the slightest perfidy. It is impossible for a woman to be friends with another of the same age.

"All this is very petty," the Doctor would add, "but observe what petty points, what lies form the basis of opinions which are taken for gospel truth by all the old women of the community."

And to divert Lamiel from the dullness of precepts, the Doctor had lent her a *Life of M. de Talleyrand* by a man of keen wit, M. Eugène Guinot.

The Abbé was already so deeply and unconsciously in love that Lamiel's moments of distraction grieved him mortally. He urged his youthful charge to read the *Treatise on the Education of Young Ladies* by the immortal Fénélon; but La-

miel was already acute enough to see how vague and inconclusive were these gentle ideas couched in a style so polished and so grateful to the vanity of the mind *in statu pupillari.*

"Upon my word," Lamiel said to herself, "there is a grace the Doctor has never known. What a difference between Sansfin's gaiety and the Abbé Clément's? Sansfin is wholly gay only when he sees some misfortune about to happen to his neighbor. The good Abbé, on the contrary, abounds in kindliness towards all his fellows."

But though she admired and even loved the youthful Abbé a little, Lamiel pitied him when she saw he expected the same benevolence in others. For her part, she was already a thorough little misanthrope. The Doctor's exterior served to explain his comment on all topics; she believed all men as wicked as he. One day, to amuse herself, Lamiel told the Abbé that his good aunt Anselme had thoroughly slandered him in the Duchess' presence. The aunt was furious at her nephew's friendship for Lamiel, her rival in the Duchess' favor; she had counted very much on the Abbé to dissipate the

power this little peasant girl had usurped over the great lady. As she saw with what a surprised, lost expression the Abbé greeted this news, she found him ridiculous. She looked him straight in the eye, for a long time. She thought this observation true:

"He is amiable, in a manner very remote indeed from Sansfin's, but he resembles the portrait of Madame's son: he has a somewhat *limited* air." (The adjective was one of the Duchess' *mots:* since Lamiel had begun to move in good company, she had rapidly acquired the art of expressing her ideas in pithy terms.)

She often joked with the Abbé; she abused him but so tenderly that he considered himself perfectly happy at her side. Again, when Lamiel listened to him, she felt him dispel a little of the boredom these great château rooms in their magnificence and melancholy inspired in her.

The Duchess remembered an English book she had adored when she lived in the village near Hartwell Castle; the Abbé Clément was explaining to Lamiel the insults a man called Burke had hurled

at the French Revolution. By giving his son a fine post in the Treasury, they had won the fellow over.

In the few private interviews Dr. Sansfin now managed to obtain with Lamiel, he showed her all the ludicrousness of the Duchess' adoration for this book. Sansfin rarely mentioned the Abbé Clément by name; but all his epigrams were so pointed as to fall back upon him. Either the young priest was an imbecile, incapable of understanding the politics that had directed the National Convention; or he was a rogue like the others, who also sought a fine place in the Treasury or its equivalent.

The reader may believe that Lamiel is about to fall in love with the amiable Abbé Clément; but no: Heaven gave her a stout, mocking soul, little disposed to harbor tenderness. Every time Lamiel saw the Abbé, she remembered Sansfin's pleasantries; whenever he argued in favor of nobility or clergy, she invariably said:

"Please be honest, Monsieur l'Abbé; what post in the Treasury do you covet, like Mr. Burke?"

But if Lamiel was almost inaccessible to tenderness, on the other hand an amusing conversation

exerted an irresistible influence upon her. The all too patient malice of Sansfin hurt that soul, still in its tender youth. She wished to possess the incisive strength of the Doctor's ideas clothed in that perfection of grace the Abbé gave to every thought he uttered.

The following is a portrait of Lamiel the Abbé Clément sent at this time to an intimate friend he had left behind in Boulogne:

*"This amazing girl, whom you taunt me with mentioning too often, is not yet a beauty: she is somewhat too tall and too thin. The head offers the germ of the perfection of Norman beauty: the brow is proud, lofty, bold; the hair of a cendré blond; the nose delicate, flawless, admirable. As for her eyes, they are pure blue but not quite large enough; her chin is thin but a trifle too long. Her face forms an oval. You cannot, I think, find fault with aught but the mouth which droops at the corners, not unlike a pike's. But the woman who governs this soul, (she is more than forty-five though latterly she enjoys an Indian summer) harps so often upon the true defects that I am almost insensible to them."*

## X

## *What is Love?*

WHEN some noblewoman of the neighborhood happened to visit the Duchess, the young priest and the little reader (a bourgeoise and even less) were not considered worthy to share the secrets of the *Ultra* Party. The July Ordinances were being prepared; many a Norman château was in the secret. On such occasions our friends moved across the room to admire the graces of a magnificent white parrot, tied to its stick by a little silver chain, at one end of the salon near a window. They were in sight yet out of earshot. The poor Abbé blushed, but Lamiel's conversation soon grew more animated than ever. In Madame's presence to speak of subjects she had not herself broached showed a lack of respect. Alone with the Abbé, the young girl would bombard him with questions on all topics, on everything that astonished her: she was perfectly

happy, but she often embarrassed her interlocutor grievously. One day, for instance, she said to him:

"There is one enemy against which all the fine books Madame makes me read for my education tend to warn me; but I am never told clearly what it is. Well, Monsieur l'Abbé, you in whom I have such confidence, tell me: What is Love?"

The conversation had until then been so sincere and naïve that the young priest, distracted by his love, lacked the presence of mind to answer that he did not know what Love was. He said thoughtlessly:

"It is a tender and devoted friendship which makes one feel supremely happy to spend one's whole life with the object of one's affections."

"But in all the novels of Madame de Genlis that Madame makes me read, there is always a man in love with a woman. Two sisters, for example, spend their lives together; they feel towards each other the most tender affection; yet one does not say of them that they are in love?"

"That is because Love," the young priest replied, "must be sanctified by marriage; that pas-

sion becomes criminal very soon which is not consecrated by a sacrament."

"Then you, Monsieur le Curé," replied Lamiel with perfect innocence, yet well aware she was about to embarrass the Abbé, "you cannot know love since you may not marry."

She uttered these words with such esprit and accompanied them with so curious a glance that the poor priest stood stock-still, his eyes dilated, staring at Lamiel.

"Does she realize the force of what she has said?" he wondered, "if so, it is wrong for me to appear so often at the château: her extreme confidence in me is very close to love and seems to be leading to it."

This delightful notion occupied the young priest's mind for a good twenty seconds; then he thought with horror:

"Good Heavens! What have I done? Not only do I yield to a guilty passion myself, but worse, I risk leading astray a young girl whose virtue is entrusted to me by a bond, tacit to be sure, yet, by that token, all the more solemn."

"My daughter!" he said to her in the tones he affected in the pulpit, so unwontedly sonorous that the Duchess and two ladies, talking in whispers, glanced up. Having uttered these two words, the young Curé, as though exhausted by the effort he had just made, drew himself up to his full height, which astonished Lamiel and even amused her:

"I have succeeded in provoking his sense of honor," she said to herself, "there must be something very extraordinary in that word *Love*."

Whilst this thought passed swiftly through her mind, the Abbé Clément was regaining courage:

"My daughter," he repeated lowering his voice, "my ministry strictly forbids me to answer any questions you may ask me about love. All I can tell you is that a folly of this kind dishonors a woman, if she allows it to last more than forty days (the duration of Lent) without consecrating it by the sacrament of marriage. Men, on the contrary, are more highly esteemed in the world according to the number of young girls or young women they may have dishonored. When a young man speaks of love to a *jeune fille*, therefore, the

girl's keenest desire is for secrecy, whereas the young man, (known in this case as the seducer), while feigning anxiety to keep the affair clandestine, is, in reality, only too eager to have it discovered and noised abroad. He tries to keep his mistress and at the same time to allow the world to guess his victory over her prudence. Thus it is strictly true to say: the worst enemy a maid can possibly find is the young man who speaks to her of love. But I shall not conceal the whole truth. In order to escape from her state of passive obedience to her mother and in order to assume a position of authority in her turn, it is natural for a maid to seek to get married. This moment is one of extreme peril: the maid runs the risk of losing her reputation forever. Always she must consider the part vanity plays in her suitor's courtship, for among us men there are only two ways to play a brilliant rôle in society: you must have displayed courage in war or in duels fought with other respected young men, or else you must have seduced many women of remarkable beauty and riches."

Here Lamiel stood on her own ground: times

innumerable the Doctor had explained to her how a girl must behave in order to enjoy a gay youth—subject to interruption by death—and at the same time not lose the esteem of the old ladies of the place she lives in. Lamiel cast a pawky glance at the Curé and said:

"But what does *to seduce* mean, Monsieur le Curé?"

"It is seduction when a man speaks too often and too emphatically to a young woman."

"Well, then," Lamiel said maliciously, "are you seducing me?"

"No, by the grace of Heaven," replied the young priest terrified, as a deep flush replaced the mortal pallor that had spread over his face during the last few moments. He seized Lamiel's hand fiercely, then pushed her far from him with a brusque gesture that surprised her. Then, resuming his homiletic tone, he went on in a loud voice:

"I could not possibly seduce you, since I may not marry you; but any maid is dishonored and most probably damned who allows anyone to speak of love or affection—the word is unimportant—

during more than forty days, and who fails to ask the so-called lover whether he intends to consecrate his sentiments by the sacrament of marriage."

"But if the man who feels affection for the young girl is already married?"

"That is the horrible sin of adultery; it forms the supreme glory of young men, and in France, they take rank by virtue of it. But whereas the young man wins glory, the unhappy adulteress must live alone in the country and most often in extreme wretchedness; when she enters a salon, all the ladies move away from her with affectation, even those as guilty as she. Her life in this world is odious, and, since her heart is filled with hatred and bitterness, she is very probably damned in the next; so that her days are an abomination upon earth and after her death the most frightful torment is visited upon her."

This picture appeared to touch the young girl deeply. Then, after a moment she said to herself:

"But does Hell exist? Is there an eternal Hell and would God be a kind God if He created an eternal Hell? For after all, at the moment I was

born, God knew quite well that I would live fifty years, let us say, and that, at the end of this period, I would be eternally damned. Would it not have been better to let me die at that very moment? What a difference in scope and interest between the Curé's ideas and the Doctor's. But I must answer the latter or he will think I cannot."

She added with bored air:

"I see quite clearly now. You must never speak daily and, above all, affectionately either to a married man or to a priest. But what if you feel affectionately inclined towards him?"

At these words the Abbé Clément drew out his watch with a convulsive movement.

"I have to visit a sick man," he cried looking wildly about him. "Adieu, Mademoiselle."

He beat a retreat, forgetting to take leave of the Duchess who was extremely shocked at this insignificant priestlet's lack of manner.

"Isn't he your man?" asked the Marquise de Pauville, who was seated at the Duchess' right.

"He is no less than the nephew of my chambermaid," replied the Duchess, with a scornful smile.

"The priestlet!" cried the Baronne de Bury, who sat at the Duchess' left.

This taunt so scornfully flung at the unfortunate Abbé Clément, who had such pretty hair, settled matters in Lamiel's heart.

Instead of dwelling upon the poverty of his arguments compared with Dr. Sansfin's adamantine logic, she saw him as a young man, utterly naïf and forced by poverty to repeat ridiculous axioms in which perhaps he did not believe.

"Did Burke," she wondered, "believe in his absurd harangue against France? Not at all!" she cried, interrupting herself, "my Abbé is an honest man."

Then she remained extremely pensive; she could not prove to her satisfaction that the Abbé was an honest man; moreover she was aware that their conversation had placed her in a position extraordinary indeed opposite this amiable man. At the end of a quarter of an hour, she was delighted since everything that stimulated her mind made her happy and here she had reason to guess what could have troubled the young Abbé so deeply.

Lamiel had never seen him look so handsome.

"What a difference," she said to herself, "between that face and a face like Sansfin's. I asked him what love was; why, he showed me, without intending to. I must make up my mind. Is he in love with me? He sees me every day and always with the utmost pleasure; he speaks to me with a sincere and lively affection. Now I am sure he much prefers to speak to me than to Madame la Duchesse; yet she knows so many things and speaks in a manner so flattering to her interlocutor. Yes, but Sansfin says that the evil in a woman's heart always appears in her face, and the Duchess is wicked. The other day Madame la Comtesse de Sainte Foi's carriage was upset on her way home from here; Madame la Duchesse was glad while I had tears in my eyes when I heard the news: I am certain of the Duchess' malevolence because Mademoiselle Anselme saw it as plainly as I did and joked about it with her friend. But supposing the Abbé Clément is in love with me, once again, what is Love?"

The reader will perhaps find this question ridic-

ulous coming from a girl of sixteen, still at an age to hear the crude jests of village evenings. But, to begin with, Lamiel had no intimate friends among the girls of her years, and, in the second place, she very rarely attended evening parties of that sort. Her contemporaries considered her an artful one and tried continually to play tricks upon her.

Madame Hautemare's cottage happened to be the centre of village society; all the prudes met there and, as often as they could, brought their daughters with them. Madame Hautemare was very proud indeed of being the centre of a society; in the hope of seeing the village girls come there, she forbade Lamiel to go out. Du Saillard, the Curé, was delighted to find a new opportunity for the villagers to spend the evening properly. Country curés take strange liberties: du Saillard went so far as to commend these meetings at the beadle's house from his pulpit. All this had happened before Lamiel was called to the château. When Dr. Sansfin made her return to the Hautemare cottage for her health, her ideas had developed; at that

period the conversation of prurient old prudes could not but prove dangerous for a young girl of her age since, in gossiping about the pretty women of the village, they often retail in no uncertain manner both the details and the varying degrees of their crimes. The prudes discussed among themselves what opinion they must hold about the sins of young girls; often their discussions reached the stage of extreme indecency; but Lamiel's profound ignorance saved everything. Her own thoughts were wholly taken up with problems of a far more lofty nature; she felt herself utterly incapable of the perpetual hypocrisy essential, according to the Doctor, if one wished to achieve any degree of success. She found nothing so tedious as the cares of a petty and exigent household, as practised by her aunt, Madame Hautemare; she felt thoroughly opposed to marrying a good villager of Carville; the end of all her desires was to remove to Rouen, when she no longer enjoyed the Duchess' protection, to earn her living there by keeping accounts in a shop. She felt no

aptitude within herself for making love; what she prized most highly in life was an interesting conversation. A story of war where heroes braved great dangers and accomplished difficult feats gave her to dream three days long, whereas she never gave more than a passing thought to a love story. What discredited love in her eyes was that she saw the most stupid women in the village vying with each other in abandoning themselves to it. When the Duchess made her read Madame de Genlis' hypocritical novels, they did not speak to her heart; the points of good taste the Duchess commented upon, interrupting Lamiel's reading to do so, Lamiel found ridiculous and foolish. Lamiel was attentive only to the obstacle the heroes met in their pursuit of love. Did they go off to dream of their mistress' charms in the depths of forests silvered by the fragile rays of the moon, she thought of the peril they ran at the hands of robbers armed with daggers whose detailed exploits she read daily in the *Quotidienne*.

Every quality we have been emphasing in Lamiel

would be altogether impossible in the well-dressed young peasant girls we see going to the village dance every Sunday.

From the village dance young couples walked away in all directions under the trees tenderly holding hands; Lamiel had seen several of these couples and the way in which they made a spectacle of themselves seemed shocking to her: her knowledge of love ranged no further than this when she returned to live at the Hautemares'. At this period, old Hautemare believed it wise to specify the danger she ran. He often spoke to her of what a mortal sin it was to go out for a stroll in the woods with a young man.

"Very well, I shall go for a stroll in the woods with a young man," Lamiel promised herself.

Such was the result of her long meditations following her conversation with the Abbé Clément.

"I must absolutely find out," she mused, "what love is. My uncle tells me it is a great crime. But what good are the ideas of an idiot like my uncle? It is like the great crime my aunt considered it to put meat juice in the soup on Friday: God was

horribly offended by it! Then I see Madame la Duchesse who, for having paid twenty francs, never fasts all year round, nor does her household, myself included, and it's a sin no longer! I must agree that every word my poor relatives say is bitterly stupid. What a difference compared with the Doctor! That poor young Abbé Clément earns, for all payment in the world, only one hundred and fifty francs per year. I have noticed how, ever since he fell in love with me, Mademoiselle Anselme has stopped her gifts; on his birthday she gave him only six ells of black cloth, and the leavings of the deep mourning for Monsieur le Duc at that. To be sure he receives a present occasionally from Madame and a few pieces of fowl and game from the peasants; but like the Sub-Prefect, Monsieur de Bermude, perhaps he is forced to say a great deal in order not to be turned out of his job. How many long speeches in favor of the cabinet that poor Monsieur de Bermude hands out to us! Then crash! he is thrown out of his job for not having spoken at the last elections exactly as his minister wished him to. 'What stupidity! What rashness!'

said Madame, 'those things were unmitigated stupidity. . . . They had not a grain of common sense!' 'But, from his point of view,' she added, 'their sense was to keep his job for him and now de Bermude will be reduced to vegetating with an income of eight hundred pounds. That is what always happens to these petty bourgeois who try to play the Roman.' "

This precipitated Lamiel into a sublime concatenation of thoughts which removed her further and further from her practical intention of going out for a walk in the woods and her choice of a young man of whom to ask what love is. . . .

## XI

## *Fédor*

Lamiel's first instinct at the sight of virtue was to believe it hypocrisy.

"The world," Sansfin used to tell her, "is not divided, as the fool thinks, into rich men and poor, good and bad, but quite simply into dupes and rogues; here is the key to the Nineteenth Century after the fall of Napoleon. For—"added Sansfin, "personal bravery and strength of character cannot cope with hypocrisy; how can a man be a hypocrite when he charges forward at the wall of a country-cemetery well fortified and defended by two hundred men? With the exception of these facts, my fair young friend, never believe a word of all the virtues people go dinning into your ears. Your Duchess for example speaks endlessly about kindness; therein, according to her, lies the quintessence of virtue; the true significance underlying

her admiration is that, like all the women of her rank, she had rather deal with dupes than rogues. Here you have the secret of the ways of the world, so called, about which women of her rank prattle endlessly. You must not believe what I am saying to you. Apply the rule I am giving you to myself: who knows but I serve an ulterior motive by deceiving you? I have of course told you that, surrounded as I am by base creatures to whom I must constantly lie in order not to fall a victim to the brute strength they can muster, it is a piece of utmost good fortune for me to find a being like you filled with natural genius. To cultivate that genius and to dare to speak the truth are for me a genuine pleasure and one which drives from my mind all the cares I must attend to in order to earn enough to live. Perhaps all I am telling you is a lie. Therefore you must not believe me blindly, but ask yourself whether what I tell does not, by chance, happen to be the truth. Thus, am I lying when I bring to your attention an event that occurred no later than last night? The Duchess speaks endlessly of kindness: well, both yesterday evening

and this morning, she was overjoyed that an accident befell her good friend, Madame la Comtesse de Sainte-Foi, the day before yesterday and that her horses threw her into a ditch as she was returning to her château a few miles away."

With these words, Sansfin disappeared. This was his technique with Lamiel; he was especially eager that she take the trouble to reflect. After the Doctor's departure, Lamiel said:

"I cannot see war, but as for strength of character, not only can I distinguish it in others, but I can even hope to put it into practise myself."

Nor was she wrong, for Nature had given her a mind particularly fitted to despise weakness. But love was making its first onslaught on her heart; she returned to her thoughts of the Abbé Clément, nor was it the conclusion of her reasoning which made her think of that amiable young man. How very pale he was! And that black suit of his, made out of the six ells of cloth Mademoiselle Anselme had given him, seemed to make him even thinner and increased Lamiel's tender pity. How joyfully she would have welcomed an opportunity to dis-

cuss with him the stern principles she owed to the high wisdom of the Doctor!

"But perhaps," she added, "everything the Abbé Clément tells me against love is done at the orders of the Archbishop of Rouen under penalty of losing his place. If so, he is quite right to do this; but as for me, I should be a fool at whom he laughed deep in his heart if I believed the first word of all he tells me. When he speaks to me of English literature, it is a very different affair; such matters do not interest his bishop, who indeed may not even know the English language. They want to deceive me on all that concerns love; yet never a day goes by but I read some pages bearing on this thing called love. Are people who make love to be classed as dupes or men of wit?"

Lamiel laid this question at the feet of her oracle, but Dr. Sansfin was too intelligent to answer it.

"Please remember, my fair friend," he said, "that I solemnly refuse to give you an answer to this question. Simply remember you run the greatest danger in trying to discover the answer. It is

like the terrible secret in the *Thousand and One Nights*, those stories that amuse you so much: when the hero wishes to find enlightenment, an enormous bird appears in the heavens, lands on his head and plucks out an eye."

Lamiel was much piqued by the inconsequence of his conclusion.

"People try to deceive me about everything connected with love. Very well then, I shall no longer ask anyone for enlightenment; I must from now on believe only what I see for myself."

The threat of dire peril, which the prudent Sansfin had brought into his answer, challenged Lamiel's courage.

"Let us see if I would find it dangerous," she cried, "my only purely practical knowledge of love is what my uncle was good enough to teach me by repeating that a girl must not go strolling in woods with a young man; well, for my part, I shall go strolling in the woods with a young man, then we shall see. As for my little Abbé Clément, I intend to redouble in affection for him in order to make him fret. He was very amusing indeed when

he drew out his watch angrily; I would have kissed him had I dared. What would he have looked like?"

Lamiel had reached the peak of her curiosity on the subject of love, when one day, as she entered the Duchess' room, she happened suddenly to interrupt a conversation about herself between the Duchess and Mademoiselle Anselme. The Duchess had received a courier from Paris during the night. It was just before the July Ordinances. An intimate friend was sending her details on the subject which caused her great anxiety for her son's safety; the troops at Saint Omer were about to march on Paris to quell the great conspiracy of the Deputies of the Left. She sent back the messenger informing her son that she felt herself growing feebler every day and that she begged him for a proof of love which might perhaps be the last: would he leave immediately within two hours of receipt and come to spend a week at Carville?

The École Polytechnique was one of the mistakes of the unfortunate Duke's life; it had been Republican even under Napoleon; certainly the

gentlemen of the Left had not failed to fanaticize it.

"A Duc de Miossens a Republican!" she cried with disgust. "A fine state of affairs that would be!"

Meanwhile, less than two hours after the Duchess had sent the courier on his return-errand with the utmost secrecy, the Doctor knew that the young Duke was about to visit the château. Here was one of the events he most feared.

"This young man has charming features; his uniform alone would be enough to evoke Napoleon in Lamiel's eyes: that might well deprive me of my charming friend. I have already taken great pains to save her from the Abbé Clément, even with his timid virtue working in my favor. In truth, I cannot expect the same restraint from the young Duke, whose scoundrelly valet de chambre leads him by the nose. This valet might make my little Lamiel understand what all this was about; then I shall have gone to all this trouble to create a woman of wit solely to render her rendezvous with the young Duke more piquant."

Two hours later, the venerable Hautemare appeared at the château in his Sunday clothes. His arrival at eight o'clock in the evening created a sensation. The outside bell rang for more than a quarter of an hour before Saint-Jean, the old valet de chambre in charge of the gates, would acknowledge to himself that somebody was ringing. The Duchess was about to imagine it was a tocsin.

"Something has happened in Paris," she thought, "which side has my son taken? Merciful Heaven! What a calamity that this Monsieur de Polignac should have actually become Minister. Our unhappy Bourbons seem fated always to appoint drivellers to the Council. They had found Monsieur de Villèle; to be sure, he was a bourgeois, but all the better reason for him to know the bourgeois who are attacking the Court. The École Polytechnique will have been sent to the Tuileries with cannon; those unfortunate children, seduced by a few flattering words from the King, will defend the Tuileries, just as the Swiss Guards did on the tenth of August."

In her impatience, the Duchess rang for all her

maids; she opened her window and rushed forward, half-clothed, onto the large balcony.

"Come, come, Saint-Jean, are you ever going to make up your mind to open?"

"Upon my word, Madame!" answered the old valet de chambre angrily, "this is a fine hour to open. I don't want them biting me."

"So you are afraid of being bitten by people who storm at my door? Who are those people?"

"That's a fine notion!" answered the old man testily. "I mean your dogs; they're at my heels. A fine idea to send for those British bull-dogs. Yes, once those confounded English bull-dogs bite you, they never let go."

More than a quarter of an hour passed before Lovell, the English servant,—who alone could make the bull-dogs, his compatriots, obey,—was awake and dressed. Throughout all this time, the ringing of the bell redoubled. Hautemare, who stood ringing at the door, supposed they were refusing to open for him. The clangor of the bell, the barking of the dogs, Saint-Jean's grumbling and the oaths of Lovell changed the keen emotions of the Duchess

into a veritable nervous attack. Her women were forced to help her to her bed and to make her breathe smelling-salts.

"My son is dead," she cried, "when he returned to Paris, my courier found the Revolution already under way."

The Duchess was lost in thought when they told her that it was only the village beadle who had had the impertinence to wake up the entire château.

"I do not know what is holding me back," Saint-Jean had said, as he opened, "I need but say one word to the Englishman and he will have his beasts devour this fellow."

"That is what we shall see," the schoolmaster answered indignantly, "I never walk out at night without the sword and pistol Monsieur le Duc gave me."

The Duchess heard the end of the dialogue; she was on the point of fainting once more with anger when Hautemare, very angry himself, appeared at last in her bedroom.

"Madame, with all the respect I owe you, I

should like to ask for the return of my niece Lamiel; it is not proper that she sleep under the same roof as Monsieur your son, who would consider it but play to dishonor a respectable family."

"What, Monsieur le Bedeau, after turning my château topsy-turvy at this unseemly hour, your first word to me is not an apology? You step in here in the middle of the night as though you were strolling across the village square."

"Madame la Duchesse de Miossens," went on the schoolmaster in a tone none too respectful, "I beg your humble pardon and I ask you to return my niece Lamiel to me instantly. Madame Hautemare does not wish her to see Monsieur your son."

"What's that you say about my son?" asked the Duchess in terror.

"I say that he will perhaps be arriving tomorrow morning and we do not wish him to see our niece."

"Great Heavens!" thought the Duchess, "the plots of Paris have already perverted even our village! I must not quarrel with this insolent fellow. He has some authority over the canaille; the best

thing I can do is to go and spend the rest of the night in my tower. Rouen is running to fire and blood like Paris; I cannot save myself in Rouen; it is rather in Le Havre that I must seek for refuge. There are many merchants in Le Havre whose great stores are filled with their merchandise; although very much Jacobins at heart, their interests will persuade them to oppose pillage for a few hours. My cousin de La Rochefoucauld was assassinated at the beginning of the Revolution because the people already realized she had sent for her post-horses. I must win over this fellow Hautemare. Those people fall on their knees at the sight of a louis d'or; I shall give him twenty-five, if need be, so he can get me horses."

The Duchess had remained silent while these thoughts passed through her mind. Hautemare, very angry at all the rudeness he had suffered at the hands of the servants, went so far as to construe this silence as a refusal.

"Madame," he said insolently to the Duchess, "give me back my niece: do not force me to return

to fetch her with all my bell-ringers . . . and, if necessary, with all the friends I have in the village."

This speech convinced the Duchess. She threw him an evil glance filled with venom; then she said in honeyed tones: "My dear Monsieur Hautemare, how ill you understand me! I wish to return your niece to you. What I thought was that the damp night-air might increase her pulmonary affection; please tell my servants to harness the horses. Ask Mademoiselle Anselme to help Lamiel dress; I myself will dress too."

She showed Hautemare to the door firmly, while he did his best to keep up his anger: he positively refused to go home without his niece; he thought of the frightful scene Madame Hautemare would make if he appeared before her without Lamiel.

At last he went out; the Duchess rushed forward, leaned against the door and pushed the three bolts. After carefully assuring herself all entrance was impossible, the Duchess had a few seconds respite.

"Now the moment has come!" she said to her-

self, "very well, very well! My diamonds, my gold and the false passport the good Doctor obtained for me!"

She was very energetic at this moment; she required no help to open a little trap-door which one of the feet of her bed held closed. The carpet had been cut at this spot and held together by a seam which she easily tore apart. A very ordinary little box contained her diamonds; the gold proved more embarrassing to her, since she had five or six pounds of it. There were also bank-notes which she hid in her waist with the diamonds; the gold she put in her muff. The entire operation took five minutes.

She ran to Lamiel's room and found the girl in tears; Mademoiselle Anselme had rudely taunted her with her uncle's indiscretion in coming to awaken the château at such a ridiculous hour.

The sight of Lamiel's tears made the Duchess forget all the fears she entertained for herself; so high was her courage at this moment that she burst out laughing with great jollity when Lamiel asked her how far the fire had spread. Mademoiselle

Anselme having answered her question only by insults, Lamiel imagined the château was in flames.

"It's simply this," the Duchess said to her, "the revolution has just broken out again in the village; but do not worry, my child; I have more than eight thousand francs' worth of diamonds on my person; I have gold and bank-notes too. We will escape to Le Havre; from there, if the worst comes to the worst, we will go and spend a fortnight in England, and, if I have you with me, I shall be as happy as in this château."

In spite of her tenderness and passionate friendship for Lamiel, the Duchess believed that it was subtly politic to breathe no word of her son. Her real intention was to spend a few hours in her tower, and there to await Fédor's arrival at Carville. In any event, if the people were too furious at Carville, she would go forth a few leagues' distance down the highroad and return within reach of the village under cover of night to fetch her son. Lamiel was overcome with admiration for the perfect courage of the Duchess.

"These great ladies have a genuine superiority

over us. To be sure I am not afraid to cross the main street and the square of Carville, where I shall find all the young men of the countryside crying: *Vive Napoléon!* or *Vive la République!* If they absolutely insist on breaking Madame's carriage, I shall offer her my arm and we will go proudly out of the village. Yvon and Mathieu, the two first bell-ringers, will certainly obey me in every respect; and Yvon is strong as Hercules; so I must not be afraid. But I am serious and worried and here Madame finds time to say things that charm us and move us to laughter."

The sang-froid of the Duchess was admirable. She handed a thousand francs, which she had in crowns, to Mademoiselle Anselme and to Saint-Jean, begging them to divide this sum among the servants. She insisted that nobody follow her. She repeated several times and with affectation that she would return the day after to-morrow. They had harnessed the horses to the landau, which bore superb arms; she was brave enough to take time to have them unharnessed and reharnessed to the coupé which, being without a crest, would be less

of a target to the populace; at last, the ladies stepped into the carriage with only Hautemare, who, wearied of his effort to keep up his anger during an hour for fear of the scene awaiting him at home were he to appear without his niece, had tears in his eyes. They were tears of weakness; he no longer knew what he was saying.

As they climbed into the carriage, the Duchess found time to say to Lamiel:

"Let us tell this man nothing about our plans. Perhaps he has been incited by the Jacobins."

When they were five hundred yards outside of the château, Lamiel was the first to say:

"But, Madame, everything is very quiet."

Soon they were in the main street of the village; the lights of the municipality burned quietly and the only noise the ladies heard was the snoring of a man sleeping in his room on the first floor, eight feet above ground level. For several minutes, Madame de Miossens abandoned herself wholly to her gaiety; Hautemare opened his eyes wide.

"We must dispel this man's suspicions," the Duchess mused.

"Well, well, my dear Hautemare, are you pleased with the ease and calm with which we brought your niece to the door of her beloved aunt's lodgings? You have the keys to the tower, go and open the room on the second floor for us and make a fire. I shall go to bed once more and—if Madame Hautemare allows it," she added with a note of irony the schoolmaster failed to catch, "since I am afraid of ghosts, I should like Lamiel to come and sleep in the little iron cot."

The reader has no doubt noted the Duchess' foresight in not asking Hautemare how he knew Fédor was due to return to Carville.

"This is bound up with Jacobin propaganda," she thought, "the man would lie to me. It is better not to put him on his guard; I shall find everything out through my little Lamiel."

As soon as Hautemare was sure his wife would not make a scene, he was very much ashamed of the rude tone he had used in speaking to the Duchess. As for his wife, mollified by the extreme politeness of the great lady who deigned in person to bring back her niece, she found no reason to

forbid Lamiel to go upstairs at once to the Duchess. The aunt dressed to make some tea. These good people considered it was better not to pay any compliments to the great lady; her husband brought the tea up to the second floor, asked for Madame's orders and took his leave with a thousand very noble salutations. . . .

## XII

### *News from Paris*

The ladies laughed heartily at their fears and fell quietly asleep after having listened for a half-hour to the profound silence reigning over the village. On the morrow, the Duchess did not awaken before nine o'clock: a moment later, her son Fédor was in her arms.

It was July 28th, 1830. Fédor, arriving at seven o'clock, had not wished them to wake his mother. He was very sad.

"If the rioting continued," he thought, "my comrades will say I am a deserter; after having embraced my mother, I must obtain her permission to return to Paris."

Lamiel, seeing this young man so worried and so tightly laced in his uniform, found a certain indefinable air of wretchedness about him that excluded the notion of strength or even courage:

Fédor was chubby and thin, he had an attractive face but his extreme fear of passing for a deserter robbed it momentarily of any expression of determination. Lamiel found him very much like his portrait.

"So this is the little peasant girl, who, by dint of Norman skill and well-calculated complaisances, has managed to win my mother's favor and, what is more, to keep it!"

Everything surrounding Fédor—the kitchen in which he caught sight of her, her uncle Hautemare, and his wife, still rueful because they had risked being cut off from the source of the little gifts the Duchess showered upon her—was too obvious and too boring to Lamiel. Do what she would, her attention kept returning to this young soldier who looked so thin, so pale and so put out. Thus the scene that Dr. Sansfin had feared so keenly in imagination took place. At every instant, Madame Hautemare approached her niece and said in a low voice:

"Why don't you do the honors of the house? You are so clever, please go ahead and speak to the

young Duke or he will believe we are common peasants."

She whispered these words and many others of the same nature to Lamiel, but in such a way that Fédor could hear them quite easily. In vain Lamiel tried to make her aunt understand that it was much better to leave the young traveller his complete liberty. All Madame Hautemare's solicitous demands did not escape Fédor; he vented his ill-humor, of which he had a great fund, on Monsieur and Madame Hautemare. Little by little, he noticed not without pleasure that Lamiel had charming hair and that she would have been very pretty indeed had not the country air tanned her skin somewhat. Finally, he was pleased to discover that she had nothing of the false, honeyed, mincing airs of your little country intriguer. Madame Hautemare went to the tower every fifteen minutes and listened at Madame la Duchesse's door to ascertain whether she was yet awake. During these errands Fédor remained alone with Lamiel, and, the instincts of youth triumphing over his terror at being taken for a deserter, at last he looked at Lamiel very at-

tentively. She, for her part, spoke to him with all the interest inspired by a vivid curiosity. Suddenly Dr. Sansfin came into the kitchen. His attitude was one to set down in paints on canvas: he stopped short and stood stock-still, like a man about to walk, his mouth open and his eyes dilated beyond recognition.

"I must agree," Fédor mused, "that here is a very ugly humpback, but people say my mother's will depends part and parcel on this ugly humpback and this singular little girl. Let us try and pay our court to them so as to obtain her permission to let me return to Paris."

Having reached this decision, the young Duke quickly entered into conversation with the country doctor. He began by giving a feverish account of the first troubles which had burst out in the garden of the Palais Royal, near the Café Lemblin at noon on the 26th: two students of the École Polytechnique who happened to be in the café when the famous Ordinances were being read aloud, had run to the École Polytechnique and had repeated with great exactness to their comrades, assembled in the

court, everything they had witnessed. The Doctor listened with an emotion strongly depicted on his mobile features; he was probably delighted at any accident which might befall the Bourbons. The insolence of nobles and clergy was bound to be deeply resented by a man who believed himself a God by nature. His imagination settled with delight on the humiliations in store for this Bourbon dynasty which, for a century now, had sedulously protected the strong against the weak.

"Are not these the people," Sansfin was saying to himself, "who gave the class I was born in the name of *canaille* forever? For them, everything intelligent is suspicious. Thus, if these beginnings of insurrection have fairly serious consequences, if these ridiculous Parisians have the courage to have courage, old Charles X may be forced to abdicate and the canaille class, to which I have the honor to belong, will have taken a step forward. We shall become a respectable bourgeoisie and the Court will be compelled to exert itself to win our good will."

Suddenly Sansfin remembered the fine position

he had secured for himself with the Congrégation.

"I am on the point of obtaining a post," he said to himself, "if it is proper for me to ask for one. Not a château in the neighborhood but would give fifty or a hundred louis apiece, according to its particular degree of avarice, to see me hanged high and short; but, before this gratifying conclusion, I see myself as the only agent through whom they can communicate with the people. I play upon their terror just as Lamiel plays on her piano. I can excite and allay them almost at will. If they obtain a signal victory, the more furious among them, those who form the casino, will persuade the others to throw me into prison. Did not that young Vicomte de Saxile, who is so handsome and so proud of his looks, tell his noble associates of the casino: 'Gentlemen, to sit down calmly and discuss what means of action the Jacobins enjoy is in itself pure Jacobinism.'

"Thus if the Parisian uprising, in spite of the frivolity of these poor triflers, is clever enough to cause the Bourbons real injury, I lose a fortune I have been carefully preparing for the last six

years among all the châteaux and priests of the neighborhood: new men of power will arise among the people and my mind will have to perform miracles to be associated with the unleashing of brute force. If the Court party triumphs and has fifty-odd liberal deputies shot, I shall be forced to escape to Le Havre and perhaps from there to England, for the Vicomte de Saxile will demand that I be thrown into prison. The very least that could happen would be for them to examine my papers to see whether I am in league with the Liberals of Paris. This young idiot wants to return to his École Polytechnique; I must urge the Duchess to allow him to; then I shall be the young man's mediator. I shall accompany him to Paris, I shall send a courier twice a day to the Duchess, I shall try to edge my way into the victorious party. These Parisians are so foolish that the Court will naturally squirm out of it with promises; when the people are no longer angry, there's nothing to be done; in a week the Parisians will have cooled off. If this happens, I win the favor of the chiefs of the Congrégation and I return to Carville as one of

their envoys. It is then my business to make all the idiots of the party understand that Monsieur le Vicomte de Saxile is a fire-eater, capable of spoiling everything. In this way I can at least save myself from the prison in which that cursed Saxile would wish me to languish. I must, therefore, flatter this young imbecile here so that he accepts me as a travelling companion."

While he was turning this over in his mind, Sansfin had begun to flatter the young Duke: he asked for a thousand details about the spirit animating the École Polytechnique and praised Monge, La Grange, and the other great men who founded this school to the skies. These great men were Fédor's gods; deep in his heart they waged war on all his prejudices of birth, carefully entertained by his parents. He was very proud of being a duke, but he thought twice a day about his title while twenty times a day he savored with delight the glory of passing for one of the best students at the École Polytechnique.

When Madame Hautemare at last came to tell them it was light in the Duchess' apartment, Fédor

had begun to consider Sansfin a man of much wit, and Lamiel's respect for Sansfin's genius had doubled as she saw how he managed to win the young Duke's favor.

While the young Duke went to place an enormous bouquet of rare flowers which he had brought from Paris at the door of his mother's room, the Doctor managed to say to Lamiel:

"The most difficult thing in the world is to please someone you despise; to be sure, I do not know if I shall succeed in finding favor with this little dukelet."

Fédor went up to his mother's room, the Doctor had several visits to make and wished anyhow to hear from the Duchess' lips all her son was about to tell her. This story would necessarily require a private interview in the course of which he would have occasion to inspire in the Duchess a desire to send him back to Paris with her son.

But when the Doctor returned an hour later, he found the Duchess in tears, almost a prey to an attack of nerves. She would not hear a word about her son's return to Paris.

"Either this revolt means nothing"—each word was punctuated by a hysterical embrace—"either this revolt means nothing and your absence cannot be noticed: you came to see your ailing mother, nothing could be simpler; or else this revolt has spread and they are standing pat while thirty thousand men from Saint Omer are marching on Paris. In that case I do not wish a de Miossens to figure among the enemies of the King, your career would be forever ruined. Now on solemn occasions. I stand *in loco patris;* I charge you sacredly not to take a step from my side."

Having uttered this last phrase resolutely, she insisted that her son, who had been travelling all night, go to the château and spend two hours resting in bed.

When she was alone with the Doctor, she said:

"Our unhappy Bourbons will be betrayed as usual. You will see that the Jacobins have won over the troops from Saint Omer. Their machinations are quite inexplicable to me at least. Now for instance, tell me, my dear friend, how yesterday evening at nine o'clock that Hautemare fellow

knew my son was due to arrive here from Paris? I had not told a living soul the contents of my letter to Fédor which I gave the Duc de R——'s courier. My son has just shown me this letter; we spent a quarter of an hour examining its seal: when my son broke it, it was intact, beyond a shadow of doubt."

The Doctor used his most subtle wiles to flatter the Duchess in everything she said; he was performing his office as physician. His purpose was to calm her nervous irritation; from Fédor himself he had learned all the young man could discover about the revolt beginning in Paris. He found the Duchess wild as a tigress: he used this term when he told Lamiel the incident.

But it was in the Doctor's interest not to be at Carville until the outcome of the July revolt was known. The Duchess' mind was soon made up. Her son's nerves were on edge, the young man was working too hard, like all students at the Polytechnique; he must take sea-baths for a fortnight. But it was useless to go to Dieppe, a town seduced by the favors of Madame la Duchesse de Berri

and therefore an object of suspicion to the Jacobins. They must quite simply seek the sea at Le Havre. The tradesmen, trembling for their shops, would not suffer pillage here, if the Jacobins got the upper hand, while if the Court were to triumph as the doctor thought highly probable, it would be impossible for evil gossips in neighboring châteaux to attach any ridicule to this little trip of the Duchess'. Fédor's thinness and pallor showed clearly enough that his health was undermined by overwork; the heat was unbearable; he had gone to the sea under the doctor's orders. The Duchess would not wait for a ball-gown and hats which had to be sent for from Paris. Fédor had always felt a desire not to sojourn in England (for he had not time) but to spend three days in that strange country. Well, from Le Havre they would go and spend three days at Portsmouth.

## XIII

### *Departure*

All these arrangements were put into effect immediately after the Doctor had suggested the idea to the Duchess. The Duchess saw an immense advantage in the plan: Le Havre was much further from Paris than Carville, and, in the second place, she flattered herself that she was not known on the road to Le Havre. Being in reality very ill, she did not leave the tower, but all the arrangements for transportation were made from the château, and, at eight o'clock in the evening, as the post-horses reached the tower, a mail-coach drove down the highroad from Paris, decorated with tricolor flags.

"Good heavens, how grateful I am to you for your splendid self-confidence, my dear Doctor," cried the Duchess as she took her place in her landau with her son and Sansfin.

The Duchess was grateful to the latter who ab-

solutely refused to take a seat in the back. Fédor, nettled by such politeness, decided to sit beside the coachman, as soon as they were two miles out of the village. The Doctor was delighted; he would be absent from Carville when the outcome of the Paris uprising would reach there and he would prevent intercourse between the young, dashing, amiable nobleman and his beloved Lamiel for a long time.

On their way, the travellers met with nothing but curiosity. Everyone asked them for news from Paris; they answered asking for news themselves, saying they had just left a country-place nearby. When they arrived at the post of Le Havre, the Duchess proudly exhibited a passport delivered to Madame Miaussante and son. She had forced the latter to take off his uniform; the poor young man was in despair.

"So, when they are fighting," he thought, "the Duc de Miossens not only deserts, but also takes off his uniform."

As soon as they were installed in Le Havre in a private house the Doctor knew of, he procured a chambermaid and two servants who had no no-

tion of Madame Miaussante's identity. Thus it was at Le Havre and free from all personal anxiety that the Duchess spent the first desperate days caused by the incredible results of the July Revolution. When she knew that the King had been exiled to England, she left for Portsmouth with her son. Returning from the shipping-office, the Doctor bought tricolor ribbons which he pinned to his button-hole and left for Paris. He exaggerated to his friends of the Congrégation the perils he had run at Carville; less than a week later, an order concerning Monsieur César Sansfin appeared in the *Moniteur:* he was appointed to a Sub-Prefecture in Vendée. His purpose was merely to establish his adherence to the new government. The Congrégation charged him with letters of recommendation; but his profession netted him seven or eight thousand francs at Carville, and Sansfin had a horror of appearing in uniform, a sword at his side.

"At Carville," he mused, "they are accustomed to my hump and the defects of my figure."

A week after his appointment, the Doctor fell ill and came to Carville on leave.

Lamiel had remained at her aunt's; three days after the Duchess' departure, four enormous packages arrived; they almost filled the covered cart of the château. They contained linen and dresses of all sorts and were a gift from the Duchess. There was a certain tenderness in this attention that moved Lamiel deeply. On July 27th, before she fled, the Duchess had gone to spend an hour at the château; she had had these bundles made up, and sceptical as to the probity of all the exemplary persons about her, she had had these bundles tied about with linen strings and her seal stamped in her presence on the different places where these threads crossed. It was a wise precaution; the packages had vexed Mademoiselle Anselme more than a little, and her annoyance rose to anger when she saw that Lamiel, who had remained in the village, did not even deign to go up to the château to pay her a visit.

The young girl scarcely gave it a thought; she was busy only in hiding the mad joy that consumed her; each morning as she awoke, she felt a new pleasure in telling herself she was no longer in that magnificent château where everybody was old and

where, out of twenty words spoken, eighteen were devoted to blaming something. Now her only disagreeable task was to write a letter to the Duchess every day. If she abandoned herself to her thoughts ever so little, the composition of her letters suffered, but in truth she had not the patience to recopy them. For a moment she thought of the polite reprimands this neglect would arouse; but she quickly banished all disagreeable thoughts; her fear of these reprimands caused her to associate the memory of the Duchess, who had been so kind to her, with that of Mademoiselle Anselme and of the other annoyances of the château. In short, ten days after she had said farewell to the château, the only memory it left in Lamiel's mind was a profound disgust for three things, symbolic to her of the most execrable ennui: the high nobility, great opulence, and edifying speeches concerning religion.

Nothing seemed to her at once more ridiculous and more odious than the dignity affected in the manner and necessity of speaking about everything, even what was most amusing, with a sort of meas-

ured and cold disdain. After having confessed these sentiments to herself with a kind of regret, Lamiel perceived that the gratitude she undeniably owed to the Duchess was exactly balanced by the displeasure the ways of the great lady inspired in Lamiel. She forgot the Duchess very speedily. Indeed had she not been forced to write daily to her, she would have forgotten her entirely.

Her horror of everything that might recall her sojourn in the tiresome château was so great that it triumphed over the vanity natural in the heart of a girl of sixteen.

The day the Duchess went away, the Doctor had managed to say to Lamiel:

"Go to your room and mourn the departure of your protectress; do not put in an appearance until to-morrow morning."

On the morrow, when she came down to embrace Madame Hautemare, the latter was much surprised to see that she wore all the clothes of a peasant, even the hideous cotton-bonnet which shames the pretty faces of the peasant girls in the region of Bayeux.

## XIV

### *Lamiel's Reading*

The modesty she assumed won her the unanimous approbation of the village. To see an ugly cotton-bonnet on the head which had worn such pretty hats comforted the envious. Every one smiled at Lamiel when she went out in the village wearing sabots and a simple peasant skirt. Her uncle, seeing she did not return from the village square, ran after her.

"Where are you going?" he cried in alarm.

"I am going to run in the fields," she said laughing, "I was in prison in that château."

And, true to her word, she set out for the country.

"Wait an hour for me. As soon as my classes are over, I will accompany you."

"Ah, *pardi!*" cried Lamiel—that was one of the vulgar words strictly forbidden at the château—"Ah, *pardi,* I can defend myself against robbers!"

To cut short all objections, she set off at a run.

She went more than two miles, stopped to talk to such of her former friends as she met and finally returned only when it was pitch dark. The schoolmaster was already launching into a tirade in three chapters on the impropriety of a girl of her age gadding abroad at night but his wife took the words out of his mouth. She could not help giving vent to her astonishment, admiration and envy at the sight of the linens and silk dresses in the packages from the château.

"Can all this really belong to you?" she asked with melancholy wonder.

After an enumeration of each object, which seemed very long to Lamiel, Madame Hautemare tried to speak with an air of assurance which the sound of her voice belied:

"I took care of you in your childhood; it seems to me I am in a position to hope that you will at least suffer me to wear the worst of your dresses, just on holidays and Sundays."

Lamiel was thunderstruck. A speech of this sort would have been impossible at the château; Made-

moiselle Anselme and the other women about the Duchess of course nourished very base sentiments indeed, but they knew how to couch them in quite another style. At the sight of these dresses, Mademoiselle Anselme would have thrown herself in Lamiel's arms and showered kisses and congratulations upon her; then she would have asked her with a laugh to lend her one of them which she would have designated by its color. This request for a dress plunged the young girl into consternation; difficult thoughts crowded in upon her. So she had nobody to love: the people she had imagined to herself as perfect, at least on the side of the heart, were as vile as the others.

"So I have nobody to love!"

While she abandoned herself to these painful thoughts, she did not move; she was still standing and her expression was serious. Her aunt Hautemare concluded that her beloved niece was hesitating to lend her one of the dresses in the package; in order to influence her, she began to catalogue all the favors she had done her before Lamiel had gone to the château.

"For, after all, you are not really our niece," she added, "my husband and I chose you at the orphan-asylum."

"All right, I shall give you four of the prettiest frocks," she cried angrily.

"Can I choose which?" said her aunt.

"Eh, *pardi,* of course," cried Lamiel with an air of despair and impatience which did not go unobserved.

She was amazed at the common speech which she had unlearned at the château. While she acknowledged the paucity of her relatives' intelligence, she had dreamed of a family to love. In her need for tenderness, she had considered her aunt's unintelligence a virtue; she felt thoroughly disillusioned; then, suddenly she melted into tears. Her uncle tried to console her for the enormous sacrifice of four dresses she had just made. He cited in detail all her aunt's claims to her gratitude. Lamiel, who wished to retain at least the faculty of loving her uncle, took to flight instinctively and went for a stroll in the cemetery.

"If I had the Doctor here," she said to herself

amusedly, "he would laugh at my grief and at the mad hopes which caused it; he would not console me but he would tell me truths which would prevent me from falling into a similar error in future."

All the prettiness and calm she had found in her uncle's lowly cottage vanished. They would not even allow her to occupy the room on the second floor in the tower, alleging that she would be alone there and that the village gossips would not fail to point out that she could open her door at night to some gallant. This idea horrified Lamiel. Confined in her little bed, separated from the dining-room by only a screen, Lamiel could not help hearing all the conversation that went on in the house. Her profound disgust only increased and gained color during the days that followed. Beside her chagrin at what she saw, Lamiel was further angry against herself.

"I thought myself wise," she mused, "because I sometimes embarrass the Abbé Clément and even that terrible Dr. Sansfin. That is simply because I can put in an apt word on occasions, but funda-

mentally I am only a very ignorant little girl. For one whole week I have been unable to shake off a profound sense of astonishment; I considered it impossible that I should not find in my uncle's cottage the liberty to move about at will. I therefore expected to be perfectly happy. I have found this liberty, the lack of which I felt so cruelly in the château, and yet something I never imagined could exist has just robbed me of every vestige of happiness."

Two days later, Lamiel concluded from her unremitting melancholy that she must mistrust hope. This truth was on the point of plunging Lamiel into despair. She saw everything in life under the brightest of colors; suddenly her dreams of pleasure suffered the bitterest disappointment. She was not tender-hearted but her mind was eclectic. An amusing conversation was the primary need of this soul into whose ken love had not yet swum; and suddenly, instead of a variety of anecdotes told at length and in highly intelligible fashion by the Duchess, instead of the delightful flashes of wit that studded the commentary of the amiable Abbé

Clément, she found herself condemned all day long to the vulgarest notions of Norman prudence, couched in the most vigorous, that is to say the basest, style.

She suffered a new sorrow: she went to see the Abbé Clément at his rectory; she caught sight of him in his orchard, reading his breviary; a moment later, a fat servant came to tell her that Monsieur le Curé could not receive her. This fat servant added in the most mocking manner:

"Be off, be off, my girl, go and pray in the church, and learn that anybody cannot come and call like this on Monsieur le Curé."

Lamiel's sensibilities were revolted; she returned to her uncle's in tears.

On the morrow she had made up her mind: she would no longer rely on the slightest welcome; she shuddered beforehand at the mere idea of going to see Mademoiselle Anselme, who she expected would receive her with the most evil mockery. Now that the Abbé Clément, whom she thought her friend, had treated her shoddily, what did anything else matter? . . .

Although born in Normandy, Lamiel was not shrewd in steeling her features against the emotions she felt. Truth to tell, she had not had time to acquire experience; hers were a romantic heart and mind which imagined the chances of happiness they were about to find in life; that was the other side of the medal. The Duchess' and the Abbé's conversation and Dr. Sansfin's rough philosophy had cultivated brilliantly the germs of wit she had inherited from Nature; but while she had spent evening after evening in this manner, she had had no chance to feel the impressions and slight mortifications a person suffers in dealing with equals. Her only experience along these lines was the impertinence of a bevy of envious chambermaids. She was sixteen years old and the merest little village girl knew far more about young men and love than she did. In spite of the poets, there is nothing idyllic about love in the villages; everything is crude indeed and based on the plainest experience.

When Lamiel reached Mademoiselle Anselme's room, she was so overcome with despair that her

eyes were frightening. Lamiel had just crossed the salon where the Abbé Clément had spoken to her so often and so graciously, and now he had refused to see her!

The old chambermaid had prepared a fund of polite impertinences to address to Lamiel as soon as she saw her. She had not forgiven the young girl the Duchess' seven silk dresses upon which herself had counted.

But her first idea as she saw Lamiel was that they were only nine or ten feet from the first drawing-room in which might perhaps be a deaf old valet de chambre. She therefore received the young girl with a politeness so cloying that it revolted her. Lamiel said tersely:

"Madame ordered me to continue my education as reader; I have come to fetch some books."

"Take anything you wish, Mademoiselle; we all know everything in the château is yours."

Lamiel took advantage of her permission and having chosen more than twenty volumes came out of the library. Suddenly she went in again.

"I was forgetting . . ." she said to Made-

moiselle Anselme, who followed her movements with jealous eye.

Lamiel had first of all taken the novels of Madame de Genlis, the Bible, *Eraste or The Friend of Youth*, *Sethos*, the stories of Anquetil, and other books authorized by the Duchess.

"I am a fool," she thought, "I allow myself to be annoyed by my profound disgust at the honeyed compliments of this woman who loathes me. I am neglecting the Doctor's precept: always consider the circumstances and rise above your momentary feelings. I can get the books Madame forbade me so strictly to read."

She took the novels of Voltaire, Grimm's *Correspondence*, *Gil Blas*, and so forth.

Mademoiselle Anselme had said she would take a list of the chosen works; but to avoid this tell-tale list Lamiel had presence of mind enough to take the books which were not bound and destined for reading. Mademoiselle Anselme seeing that the books she took away were unbound was satisfied to count them. As she carried her burden homeward, Lamiel was plunged into intense melancholy; she

could not answer a question she was asking herself, something which always caused her self-annoyance:

"What!" she said to herself, "I am irritated at the well-meaning crudeness I find in my uncle and I am again irritated at the too cloying politeness of that Mademoiselle Anselme who with all her heart wishes me at the bottom of some well, as Dr. Sansfin said. Then at the age of sixteen I am exactly as Dr. Sansfin says women are at fifty. I grow irritated at everything and I am angry against the human species."

The copy of *Gil Blas* which she had taken at the château was full of prints; this determined her to open it before any of the other books. She had managed to smuggle all these volumes into the tower unknown to her uncle. The sight of so many books could not have failed to anger him, for, though a schoolmaster, he often repeated:

"It was books that ruined France."

This was one of the maxims of the relentless du Saillard, the Curé of the parish. Having hidden her books on the ground-floor of the tower, Lamiel

had read some pages of *Gil Blas;* she had found so much pleasure in these that she dared escape from the house through a back window at eleven o'clock, when she saw her uncle and aunt were sleeping comfortably. She had a key to the tower, she went in and read until four o'clock in the morning. As she returned to bed, she was perfectly happy; all her anger had vanished. To begin with, as her mind was filled with *Gil Blas'* adventures, she no longer remembered the feelings she had blamed herself for; in the second place, better still, in *Gil Blas* she had learned the value of indulgence towards herself and others. She no longer considered the sentiments that the sight of the fine dresses had inspired in her aunt Hautemare were so vile.

For a week, Lamiel was lost in her reading.

## XV

## *Love in the Woods*

During the months that followed, whenever she was in her uncle's house, Lamiel was bored. She therefore spent her time in the fields. She resumed her rêveries on love; but there was no tenderness in her thoughts; rather, they were based on curiosity.

The language her aunt used when she tried to forewarn Lamiel against the seductions of men owed a complete success to its platitude; the disgust it inspired in Lamiel rebounded upon love.

One day her aunt said to her:

"Since people know the fine clothes I wear to church on Sunday come from you, the young men will perhaps suppose—and not without reason—that Madame la Duchesse will give you a present on your wedding-day. As soon as they find you alone, they will try to take you in their arms."

These last words whetted Lamiel's curiosity. As she was returning from her evening walk, a young man homeward bound from a wedding in the neighboring village, where the cider had flowed plentifully, presuming upon a slight acquaintance, accosted Lamiel and made to take her in his arms. Lamiel allowed herself to be embraced by the young man with the utmost tranquillity; he had already begun to entertain high hopes when she repulsed him vigorously; and, as he returned to the task, she threatened him with her fist and set off at a run. The drunkard could not follow her.

"What! Is that all it is!" she said to herself. "To be sure he has soft skin and his mouth is not hard, like my uncle's, whose kisses scratch me!"

But on the morrow, her curiosity gained the upper hand over the scant pleasure she had found in being embraced by a young man.

"There must no doubt be more in it than I felt; otherwise the priests would not harp so often on the prohibition of these sins."

Hautemare, the magistrate, had a sort of usher to hear the children their lessons; his name was

Jean Berville, he was a tall simpleton of twenty and very blond indeed. The children themselves made fun of his little round bullet-head, perched on the top of this tall body. Jean Berville used to tremble in Lamiel's presence. One holiday, she said to him after dinner: "The others are going to dance; go out alone and wait for me at the cross-roads, a quarter of a mile from the village, near the tall Cross; I shall meet you there in a quarter of an hour."

Jean Berville set off; having reached the Cross, he sat at its foot, without suspecting anything. Lamiel arrived.

"Take me for a stroll in the woods," she said to him.

The Curé made a special point of forbidding girls to go for a stroll in the woods. When she was in the woods, in a very secluded glade surrounded by tall trees and behind thick bushes, she said to Jean:

"Embrace me, hold me in your arms."

Jean embraced her and grew very red. Lamiel did not know what to tell him; she stayed there, in

silent meditation for a quarter of an hour, then said to Jean:

"Let us go away; you go on as far as Charnay, a mile away from here, and do not tell anyone I took you to the woods."

Jean, still crimson, obeyed; but the next day, having returned to school, Jean looked at Lamiel a great deal.

The first Monday of the month occurred a week later. It was Lamiel's custom to go to confession on that day. She told the man of God about her stroll in the woods; she took care to hide nothing from him, devoured, as she was, by curiosity.

The good Curé made a terrific scene, but he added nothing or almost nothing to her knowledge. Three days later, Jean Berville was dismissed by Hautemare, who began to keep an eye on his niece Lamiel. Some words spoken by Monsieur Hautemare and overheard by Lamiel led her to believe she was not without responsibility in Jean's dismissal. She looked for him, found him a week later driving a neighbor's cart, ran after him and gave him two gold-pieces. Utterly astonished, Jean

looked off in the distance; there was nobody on the highroad. He embraced Lamiel and wounded her with his beard; she pushed him back vigorously, yet all the while resolved to know what love really was about.

"Come to the woods where we were that Sunday. Tomorrow at six o'clock. I shall go there too."

Jean began to scratch his ear:

"The fact is," he said to her after many giggles and expressions of "Mademoiselle is too kind!" "The fact is" Jean Berville said finally, "my work will not be finished tomorrow. This job is going to bring me better than six francs a day, and I won't be driving the cart back from Méry before eight o'clock at night."

"When will you be free?"

"Tuesday. But no—there may be something else to do and I shall not have the money in my hands until everything is quite finished. Wednesday will be surer, as it won't interfere with my own affairs."

"Very well; I shall give you ten francs. Come

to the woods Wednesday without fail, at six o'clock in the evening."

"Oh! for ten francs, if Mademoiselle wishes, I can certainly go tomorrow, Tuesday, at six."

"Very well then, tomorrow evening," said Lamiel, out of patience with the clod's avarice.

On the morrow, she found Jean in the woods, dressed in his Sunday clothes.

"Embrace me," she said to him.

He embraced her. Lamiel had noticed that, in obedience to her orders he had just shaved. She mentioned the fact to him.

"Oh! but, Mademoiselle, that is only fair; Mademoiselle is the mistress; she pays well and she is so pretty."

"Exactly: I wish to be your mistress."

"Oh! that is different," said Jean in a business-like manner. Then, without passion, without love, the young Norman made of Lamiel his mistress.

"Is there nothing else?" said Lamiel.

"No, nothing," answered Jean.

"Have you already had many mistresses?"

"I have had three."

"And there's nothing more to it than this?"

"Not that I know of. Does Mademoiselle wish me to return?"

"I shall tell you in a month from now. No gossip, remember! Do not mention me to anybody."

"Oh! I'm not such a fool," cried Jean Berville. His eyes shone for the first time.

"What? Can love be merely this?" Lamiel said to herself in amazement. "What is the good of prohibiting it so violently? But perhaps I am doing poor Jean a wrong; so as to be available to come here, he may perhaps refuse some good job."

She called him back and gave him five francs more. He uttered his passionate thanks. Lamiel sat down and watched him move off. Then she burst into laughter as she repeated:

"What? This love they all talk about: is that all there is to it?"

## XVI

### *Duval's Master*

As she was returning home, pensive and mocking, she noticed a handsome, very well-dressed young man advancing towards her on the highroad. The young man, who seemed to be near-sighted, almost stopped his horse so as to observe Lamiel more comfortably through his glasses. When he was only some thirty paces away, he made a gesture of joy, called his servant and gave him his horse. The servant went away at a canter.

Young Fédor de Miossens, for it was he, patted his hair into place and advanced towards Lamiel with an air of assurance.

"Decidedly, he wishes something of me," she said to herself.

When he was quite near her:

"Obviously he is timid and wants to give himself an air of self-assurance."

This observation, which struck our heroine immediately, gave her much confidence; as she saw him advancing, with very jerky and highly fatuous movements, she thought:

"The road is very lonely."

The day after the young Duke's arrival, Duval, his favorite valet, told him that his visit had caused the immediate dismissal of a young grisette of sixteen, charming on all counts, his mother's favorite, who spoke English, etc. . . .

"So much the worse!" the young Duke had said.

"What do you mean: so much the worse!" Duval went on with the calm of a man who rules his master, "here is a possession stolen from M. le Duc; he owes it to himself to besiege the young woman. The thing to do is to give the baggage a few pounds and a nice room in the village, where Monsieur le Duc can go to smoke a cigar of an evening!"

"It would be almost as boring as at my mother's," said the Duke with a yawn.

Duval, seeing that his description of such felicity made but a slight impression, added:

"If some one of Monsieur le Duc's friends comes to see him in the château, Monsieur le Duc will have something to show him in the evening."

This reasoning had its effect and Duval's eloquence (he took pains to speak of Lamiel morning, noon and night) prepared the young man to allow himself to be led on, though he was inclined by nature to balk at the idea of such a ridiculous step lest it be turned into a ridiculous anecdote at his expense. But in the end the boredom of the Château de Miossens grew unbearable; the Abbé Clément was too intelligent to hazard ideas before a young oaf, newly-arrived from Paris, who, moreover, knew that he was the nephew of one of his mother's chambermaids.

So Fédor finally capitulated, but against his will, before the exhortations of his tyrant Duval. For the last three or four years he had really been very much occupied with Geometry and Chemistry; he had retained all the notions of a sixteen-year-old boy about the facile, light tone a man of birth should use when accosting a grisette, even one who knew English. These notions formed the real ob-

stacle, though he dared not confess them to Duval. Fundamentally, the fellow's unblushing effrontery shocked him; Fédor feared ridicule intensely. But he was not without nobility of soul; he never dreamed that the five or six louis the valet won on the furnishings of the little apartment to be offered Lamiel constituted his only motive for furthering the affair. The more timid Fédor was, the more agreeable Duval's flattery proved to him; Duval could determine him to act only by pushing his flattery to excess. Duval reached the heights of flummery the day Fédor made up his mind to speak to Lamiel.

Fédor jumped hastily off his horse the moment he caught sight of her and went towards her gesticulating violently.

"Here, Mademoiselle," he said, "is a wooden box, mounted with steel points of the most charming effect. You forgot it when you left my mother's château. She loves you dearly and she begged me to return it to you at the earliest opportunity. Do you know that I have been searching for you for more than a month? Although I had seen you but

once, and, if you recall, for but a few moments, I recognized you from afar by your distinguished appearance. . . ."

Lamiel's eyes were superb with intelligence and wit, whilst, in complete immobility, she looked down from the height of her character upon this young elegant who was turning himself inside out as he made little staccato gestures like a leading man in a farce.

"He has not said a single pretty word," thought Lamiel, "he is scarcely much better than that idiot of a Jean Berville whom I just left. How different from the Abbé Clément! How nice the Abbé would have been as he brought me back my box."

After a quarter of an hour, time hanging heavy indeed on the young girl's hands, the Duke imagined a compliment, natural and neatly-turned. Lamiel smiled; at once Fédor became charming; time ceased to appear so horribly long to both. Encouraged and delighted by this slight success, the Duke became charming, for he had in reality a fund of wit; Nature had merely forgotten to give him will-power. The unfortunate Duke had been so

much and so often burdened with counsel on the thousand blunders a young man of sixteen commits when called upon to speak in a salon as a man of the world, that, when the least gesture or word was required of him, he was aghast as he recalled three or four contradictory rules he must not fail to observe. It is this same embarrassment which makes our artists so dull. The agreeable mot he hit upon while seeking to win Lamiel's favor gave him courage; he forgot his rules and became altogether amiable. It would have been difficult to prove more charming.

"Yes, I certainly should have sent away my Jean," Lamiel said to herself, "and learned what love is from this person. But perhaps he himself does not know."

Soon the Duke, at his ease, reached a point where he was or appeared to be a little too much so.

"Good-bye, Monsieur," Lamiel said to him at once, "I forbid you to follow me."

Fédor remained standing on the road as though changed into a statue. This amazing, unexpected act fixed the memory of Lamiel in his heart for-

ever. Fortunately, on reaching the château, he dared confess the trouble to Duval.

"You must let a week go by without speaking to this affected chit. At least"—added Duval, seeing he was about to displease the Duke—"that is what a young man of low birth would do. But people of your station, Monsieur le Duc, can afford to consult their own good pleasure before everything else. The heir to one of the noblest titles of France and one of her greatest fortunes is not bound by ordinary rules."

The young Duke kept a man who spoke with so much distinction by him until one o'clock in the morning.

The next day it rained, which made Fédor desperate; he spent his time dreaming of Lamiel; he could not go riding over the roads in the hope of meeting her. He took a carriage and passed in front of the Hautemares' door twice. The second day he waited for the hour of his afternoon stroll with all the impatience of a lover; indeed, this love, created by Duval, had already delivered him from one part of his ennui.

Duval had supplied him with five or six formulas to use when accosting the girl. But Fédor forgot everything when he caught sight of her a half-mile ahead on the road where they met the first time. He quickened his speed to a gallop and sent back his horse when he was at a hundred paces from her; he went up to her trembling and so deeply moved that he told her what he was really thinking.

"You sent me away the day before yesterday, Mademoiselle, and you filled me with despair. What must I do in order not to be dismissed now?"

"You must refrain from talking to me as you would to one of Madame la Duchesse's chambermaids; I was that, more or less, but I am so no longer."

"You were her reader, but never her chambermaid, and my mother made you her friend, Mademoiselle. I too would like to be your friend, but on one condition: you shall play the rôle of duchess. You will truly be mistress, in the full sense of the word."

This beginning pleased Lamiel; her pride warmed to the young Duke's timidity; but the

drawback to this sensation was that it entailed too considerable an alloy of contempt.

"Adieu, Monsieur," she said to him after some fifteen minutes, "I do not wish to see you to-morrow."

And, as the Duke hesitated to withdraw:

"If you do not go away this very instant, I shall not see you for a week!" she added imperiously.

The Duke took to his heels. His flight amused Lamiel infinitely; she had heard a thousand times at the château of the respect with which everybody treated an only son, the heir to so great a name; she found it gratifying to do exactly the opposite.

## XVII

## *The Passport*

Their acquaintance continued, but on the same tone; Lamiel was not only an absolute but also a capricious mistress. However, after a fortnight, she multiplied their meetings, because she began to find the afternoons tedious without a handsome young man to vex. She spent her life inventing torments.

"Dress in black tomorrow when you come to see me."

"I shall obey; but why such a mournful costume?"

"One of my cousins just died; he was a cheesemonger."

She was amused at the effect this detail produced on the handsome young man.

"If ever anyone hears of this," he said to himself, as he regained the château sadly, "I shall be destroyed with ridicule."

He asked his mother's permission to return to Paris. No doubt he would have lacked the courage to stay there, but anyhow permission was refused him.

"At all events," he said to himself the next day as he made his way to their tryst, which happened that day to be in a sabot-maker's cabin in a nearby wood, "let no one ever deny the progress of Jacobinism: here I am wearing mourning for a cheese-merchant."

Seeing him duly clad in mourning, Lamiel said to him:

"Kiss me."

The poor lad wept with joy. But Lamiel tasted no happiness other than that of commanding. She allowed him to kiss her because, that day, her aunt had been making a scene even more violent than usual over her frequent meetings with the young Duke, which were now village-gossip. Lamiel changed her meeting-place daily in vain. For three days her curiosity tasted an infinite pleasure when Fédor related the minutest details of his life in Paris; for this reason she turned a deaf ear to the

voice of prudence counselling her to dismiss him with one word when she saw him.

Day was fading apace. Lamiel and her friend left the wood to return to the village. With a charming naturalness and much wit the Duke was relating how he spent his time in Paris; Lamiel saw her uncle Hautemare from afar alighting from a carriole hired apparently at some expense to spy on her. This sight roused her impatience.

"You still have that faithful valet you call Duval?"

"Oh yes, of course," said Fédor with a laugh.

"Well then, send him back to Paris to fetch something you have forgotten."

"But that is very inconvenient; how could I get on without him?"

"You are crying like a child afraid of its governess. Anyhow, don't bother to see me again until Duval has left Carville. Here comes my uncle running after me; I wish I could get rid of him as easily as I can get rid of you. Adieu!"

Lamiel was subjected to an extremely long and disagreeable scene with her uncle. The scene be-

gan again when she reached home. Madame Hautemare had the floor and kept it at length. Boredom paralysed any other feeling in Lamiel. She would have thrown herself into the waters of the Seine without a moment's hesitation to save her uncle or her good aunt were they in danger of drowning; but when they came to this young girl, who found them so tedious, and talked of their white hair dishonored by her conduct, all she felt was the abysmal dullness of their conversation. At last the kindly old uncle, having employed phrases of the highest pathos, asked her on her word of honor not to go out after dinner on the morrow. Lamiel did not see how she could seriously refuse him; her own religion was honor; once she had given her word, she could not have broken it. Her absence from all the usual trysting-places filled the Duke with despair. After a whole night of uncertainty, he had sacrificed to his mistress a man who was his master. The essential, in the eyes of the young Duke, was that Duval should not learn his fall from grace. Consequently he heaped blandishments upon him and charged him to bring back an account of

the life the Vicomte D——, his intimate friend, was leading. The Duke even condescended to tell Duval in confidence that there was a possibility of his winning the hand of Mademoiselle Ballard, the daughter of a rich hide-merchant, and that the Vicomte, according to a letter from a common friend, was presumably trying the same fortune.

It seemed as though that week the cataracts of the heavens were massed over Normandy; it rained steadily for three days, and her depression at this weather, not to speak of frequent reprimands in the Hautemare house, completely stifled what scant pity had touched the none too sensitive heart of our heroine when she considered the lonely future of the old couple.

The fourth day it still rained but somewhat less; Lamiel, in heavy sabots, a cotton-bonnet on her head, put on a square piece of oil-cloth with a hole in the middle for her head to pass through and went to the sabot-maker's hut in the thick of the forest on the chance of meeting Fédor. At the end of an hour she saw the Duke coming up, drenched to the skin; but she noticed he had taken care of his horse

rather than himself. This horse had just covered three or four leagues at great speed across country.

"I have just been to each of our meeting-places," said the Duke, who scarcely looked amorous or passionate, "My horse Hawk is all in; you have no idea of the mud in this country."

"Oh! yes, I have! A peasant like myself knows that. . . I like Hawk because he makes you look ridiculous; you love him a hundred times better than the woman you pompously call your mistress. It does not hurt me in the least, but it does make you ridiculous."

This epigram which at first seemed a figure of rhetoric was, of course, perfectly true. At one time Lamiel had been on the point of falling in love with the Abbé Clément. As for the Duke, she considered him through her curiosity and for her instruction.

"So this then," she mused, "is what Madame la Duchesse calls a man of good company? Were I forced to choose I think I should prefer even that idiot of a Jean Berville who loved me for five francs. Let us see how he will look when I make

my suggestion. Duval is not at his side; until now, the valet's skill and effrontery have reduced his trouble to a mere expenditure of money. How in the world will this fine lad go about it? Perhaps he will not try at all; he will be frightened and will hold me in his arms like a hunting-gun. Let us see."

"My handsome little Fédor, that poor Hawk (a thorough-bred who ran for a prize at Chantilly, where the peasants were smart enough to make you pay two louis for a chicken) is very wet indeed and you have no blanket; he may take a chill; I advise you to take off your coat and throw it over his back. Instead of talking to me, you should be walking Hawk in the woods."

Fédor could make no answer, so worried was he about his horse and so true were Lamiel's words.

"That is not all," she continued, "an even worse thing is about to occur; happiness is hovering over your head!"

"How do you mean?" asked Fédor, dumbfounded.

"I am going to run away with you. We will go and live together in an apartment in Rouen

—together in the same apartment, do you hear?"

The Duke stood motionless, rigid with astonishment; Lamiel also shuddered, then went on:

"Since to love a peasant may dishonor you, I shall touch this alleged love of yours with my hands; or, to put it more clearly, I want to make you agree that your heart is not strong enough to harbor *love*."

He was so agreeable that for the second time since they had known each other, Lamiel said to him:

"Embrace me, and passionately. Oh! you are knocking off my bonnet." (It must here be stated that nothing is more hideous and more ridiculous than the bonnets affected by the young women of Caen and Bayeux.)

"You are right," said the young man laughing.

He took her bonnet from her head, put on it his own hunting cap, and kissed her with a rapture that had for Lamiel all the charm of the unexpected. Sarcasm disappeared from her lovely eyes.

"If you were always like that, how I should love you!" She paused, then: "If the bargain I

propose suits you, you must get a passport for me, for I am afraid of the police."

(This sentiment is almost innate in parts of the country that saw the Chouans in about 1795.)

"You will take some money along," Lamiel went on, "you will ask permission of Madame la Duchesse, you will rent a very pretty apartment in Rouen, and we will live together—who knows? ten days at least—until you begin to seem dull to me."

The young Duke was overjoyed; he sought to embrace her again.

"No, no!" she said, "you will never kiss me save when I order you to. My relatives bore me to death with endless sermons; it is to make fools out of them that I am giving myself to you. I do not love you; you lack truth and naturalness; you always look as though you were playing a comedy. Do you know the Abbé Clément, that poor young man with but one black suit, and threadbare at that?"

"What do you want to do with that poor Clément?" the Duke laughed haughtily.

"He looks as though he believed what he said

when he says it," Lamiel replied. "If he were rich and if he had a Hawk, I would be talking to him."

"But you are making a declaration of hatred to me, not of love."

"Very well then, let us not go to Rouen; do nothing I order you. For my part, I never lie; I never exaggerate."

"My love is so ardent that I shall end by kindling a flame in this beautiful statue," Fédor said to her with a smile. "The great difficulty is the passport! . . . Ah! if only I had Duval."

"I wanted to see what you could do without Duval."

"What! you are machiavellian to that point?"

Little by little Fédor realized his happiness; he even insisted a great deal that Lamiel imagine they had already reached their nest in Rouen, but only managed to have himself sent away half an hour before sunset. Then she called him back; the wood was already so full of water that she wished to ride on horseback behind him until they reached the highroad. To feel her so near him was too much for Fédor's reason; he was drunk with love and

he trembled so furiously that he could scarcely hold his horse's bridle.

"Well then, turn around," said Lamiel, "and kiss me as much as you like."

Drunk with happiness, Fédor showed a spark of character. He went straight after a gamekeeper, a former soldier, who lived more than two miles away in one of Fédor's forests. He gave him a few napoleons and asked him for a woman's passport.

Lairel reflected a long time; the man had much character and will-power but little wit; he could not invent. For the first time in his life, the Duke was obliged to think and to use his imagination. He soon found a means.

"You have a niece; apply for a passport for her. You can say she has come into some money at Forges, beyond Rouen; but she must go to see an attorney in Rouen and then a co-heir living in Dieppe. Perhaps she will even have to go to Paris. Therefore, my dear Lairel, we shall need a passport for Rouen, Dieppe and Paris. You will deliver the passport to me; three days later, you tell the Mayor that she has lost the passport, that she

is disgusted with the idea of her journey (a lost passport is an evil omen!), and that she is staying here. I shall have a letter written from Rouen telling about this legacy and explaining that she need no longer make the journey."

"I shall do this all step by step. But what about my honor? The name of my poor niece will be borne by some lady Monsieur le Duc has sent for from Paris."

"Perhaps you are right. Just change the spelling of your niece's name. What is her name, by the way?"

"Jeanne Verta Lavièle, nineteen years old."

The Duke tore out a page of the gamekeeper's register and wrote: *Leviail, Jeanne-Gerta.*"

"Try to have a passport made out in that name."

"It is nine o'clock, the Mayor is at the tavern; I'll get that screed out of him. If he does not go and consult the Curé, the game is ours."

That very evening, at a quarter to twelve, the gamekeeper came to the château in spite of the stormy weather and gave the young man a passport bearing the name *Geanne Bertait Leviail.*

"I wrote it," he said, "I could have written anything I liked."

The Duke made him a present of as many napoleons as Lairel had hoped to receive francs.

At eight o'clock, he went by the Hautemare's gate and stood near the gateway, passport in hand. Lamiel saw him plainly.

"After all, he is not such a fool," she said to herself, "but perhaps Duval has returned to the château."

Then, unexpectedly she found herself pitying the poor old couple she was about to abandon. She wrote them a very long, carefully phrased letter. She began by giving her aunt all her fine dresses; then she promised that she would return in two months without having failed in her duty. Finally she advised her excellent relatives to say that she had gone with their consent to nurse an old ailing aunt, near Orléans, in their native country.

## XVIII

### *Holly-green*

The following day, the meadows were deep under water, but the weather was splendid. At three o'clock Lamiel found herself near a bridge, thirty paces from the main road. Fédor had no intention of carrying off the elopement that day.

"I was so sad and so deeply touched as I left the house and those poor old people who are so wearisome," she said to Fédor, "that I do not wish to return there."

The young Duke was no longer the same man as the day before; he was astonished and embarrassed by her declaration. But Lamiel having explained to him that, equipped with her passport, she was going to hire a horse and go to B——, where she would wait for him a day or two, the Duke regained his spirits.

Lamiel saw his joy. She asked him if he had received his vests from Paris. The day before, he

had spoken to her for a long time about a beautiful assortment of hunting-vests his tailor was going to despatch to him; there was one in especial, with gray stripes on a gray field, which had a charming effect, and, what was more, it was in style that year.

After the young Duke had spoken for a long time of the vest with gray stripes on a gray field, Lamiel said to herself:

"To be sure, he likes me to tell him all the details of my life at home; he too tells me of what interests him."

This sage observation cut short her contempt.

"Well then, I shall leave for B—— all alone; you come on to B—— tomorrow, unless the business of the fashionable vests keeps you back at the château."

"How cruel you are! You take an unfair advantage of the amazing wit Heaven has given you! Are you not the first love of my life?"

He spoke gracefully and was never in want of ideas, neat little ideas, highly polished and utterly amiable. Lamiel did him justice on that score, but

the memory of the vest with gray stripes on a gray field spoiled everything.

"It is better in the interests of your prudence that I should go away alone. If my poor relatives were so foolish as to seek counsel of the attorney Bonel, our neighbor, they might accuse you of abduction. Or course, as a matter of fact, I can swear to you that you are abducting me only very slightly. For greater prudence, drive by their gate in your carriage and show yourself in the village."

Lamiel and her friend were walking in the forest; it was filled with puddles of water three or four inches deep, thus forcing the pedestrian to make many detours. Lamiel, thinking of her relatives, was sad and wistful. She interrupted a rather long silence to say to the Duke, with an air of profound conviction:

"Would you really have the courage to take me on horseback behind you to the outskirts of Bayeux, on the other side of the forest? I could catch the coach from there and in the somewhat unlikely event of pursuit no one will dream I have crossed the forest in such weather."

Fédor lowered his head and did not listen to the end of her remark. The cruel expression: "Would you have the courage?" had awakened the French chevalier in him.

"You are bitterly unkind," he said to Lamiel, "and I must be mad indeed to love you."

"Very well then, do not love me; people say that love inspires devotion, and I am much mistaken, or your heart is not destined to busy itself seriously with anything but the charming vests your tailor sends you from Paris."

Fédor strove his utmost at that moment not to love her, but he felt that to see her no more was an effort beyond his strength; he lived only during the hours he spent with her. He told her charming things with fire enough and especially with a grace to which Lamiel was beginning to become sensitive.

Peace having been made, he helped her onto his horse, not without certain manœuvres charming to a lover; it was impossible to find a prettier, fresher and above all more piquante girl than La-

miel was at this instant; all she lacked was a certain fullness.

"That is one of the disadvantages of extreme youth," the Duke said to himself.

As he knew the art of horsemanship even to vaulting, he jumped on behind her and in the density of the wood he obtained permission to embrace her several times.

Lamiel reached B—— early; on the following day she waited for Fédor but he did not arrive.

"What a dupe I am to wait for him! Perhaps he will have been unable to send his trunks to Rouen. Anyhow what need have I of this pretty doll? Have I not three napoleons? That is more than enough to get to Rouen."

Lamiel boldly took the evening coach; she found it occupied by three commercial travellers; the tone of these gentlemen revolted her. How different from the Duke's! Soon she was very much afraid; a moment later, she was forced to seize her scissors.

"Gentlemen," she said to them, "perhaps I shall

take a lover some day, but it will not be one of you, you are too ugly. Those hands trying to grasp mine are a blacksmith's. If you do not move them away at once, I shall tear the skin off them with my scissors"—which she did, to the great astonishment of the commercial travellers.

It must be said to justify them that, in the first place, she was much too pretty to be travelling alone, and, in the second place, everything was modest about her except her glance. This glance possessed such wit that, in the eyes of people crude and blind to shades of meaning, it might easily appear provocative.

Lamiel reached X—— at nine o'clock in the evening. As she entered the dining-room of the inn, she found twelve commercial travellers seated at table.

She became the object of general attention and soon of compliments from all of them. She had noticed that, in the coach, her epigrams little short of insults had produced a greater effect than the points of her scissors. One of the travellers seated at the table began to pursue her with his compli-

ments to an extent that proved genuinely uncomfortable; he laid claims to knowing her; he began to speak of his prowess in love.

"It seems, Monsieur," she said, "that you are accustomed to conquer at first sight."

"I must confess," answered the man, "that the belles of Normandy do not let me pine away for unrequited love."

"Well, then, no doubt you are as attractive today as usual. Now you have been making love to me for over an hour; I am a Norman and I am proud of it. How is it then that to me you seem ridiculous and boring?"

The laughter was universal. The Lovelace threw back his chair in a fury and left the dining-room.

Lamiel had singled out a rather ugly, shy-looking young man; she spoke to him graciously; he could scarcely answer her; he grew very red. In a few moments Lamiel had made him her protector. He advised her in a low voice to ask the landlady for some tea and to invite her to keep her company.

"It will cost you thirty-five sous," he said, "but you will be assured of her protection for the night."

Lamiel followed this counsel and invited the timid young man, who happened to be an apothecary, to take tea with her.

"Is it not true," he asked the landlady, after having praised her tea, "that Mademoiselle is too beautiful to be travelling alone? Her eyes are too bright with wit, she ought to assume a stupid air; but since such a metamorphosis is impossible, I shall give her a recipe."

The word metamorphosis, pronounced with unction, conquered the landlady. The apothecary continued with growing enjoyment.

"Pharmacists have holly-leaves crushed into powder," he said, "you know, Madame, those leaves with prickles on their edges that are of so beautiful a green. Would you find it repugnant," he said, addressing Lamiel directly, "to put one of these crushed leaves on one of your cheeks?"

The suggestion produced a burst of laughter.

"Why that operation?" said Lamiel.

"So long as you do not wash that cheek, you will be ugly; and unless you hide your cheek with your handkerchief, I swear to you that not a single one of these braggart travellers will importune you with proposals of gallantry."

They laughed over this trick until eleven o'clock.

"The pharmacy will close directly," said the landlady.

They sent for a little sap-green; the apothecary rubbed the piece of green on his finger, approached the mirror, covered one cheek with the powder and looked at the ladies. His appearance was ghastly.

"There you are, Mademoiselle," he said to Lamiel, "your coquetry is about to find itself at odds with your love of tranquillity. Tomorrow morning, before you get into the coach, it is in your power to be almost as ugly as I am."

Lamiel laughed heartily at this recipe, but before falling asleep, she thought of Fédor for more than an hour.

"What a difference!" she said to herself, "that apothecary is reasonable and he has something to

say, but you can see the fool in him at first glance. What an emphatic tone he assumed when he saw the success of his recipe. These men of knowledge give me no other desire than to be silent. I always wish to talk when I am with my little Duke, but I tell him too many disagreeable things."

The next day, the Duke did not arrive; this absence, which made him appear to possess character, had a great effect upon Lamiel.

"I really tormented him too much about his vest; he is taking his revenge, all the better, I didn't think he had it in him."

The travellers were still in a majority in the house. Lamiel cast a glance into the dining-room and went up to her room to put a light layer of green on her cheek. The effect it caused was admirable; ten times during dinner the mistress of the inn came over to see her and burst out laughing when she saw the morose air with which the travellers looked at Lamiel. Her husband, who was presiding at the table d'hôte, wished to know the reason for all this gaiety and soon found himself

sharing it. He showered attentions upon the poor girl with a blemish on her cheek and died laughing every time she spoke to him.

The Duke arrived in the midst of dinner. His face lighted up charmingly when he recognized Lamiel. The poor young man was unable to eat, so great was his consternation at the blemish which had given an abominable color to one of his mistress' cheeks.

Lamiel was dying to tell him about it.

"Can it be that I love him by any chance? Is that the moral side of love?"

She was not accustomed to resist her whims; she arose from table before dessert, and, a few moments later, the Duke arose too. But how was he to find his mistress' room, how to enquire for it? He asked a servant, speaking familiarly.

The fellow answered him boldly:

"Where did we ever herd pigs together, for you to speak so familiarly to me?"

The Duke had never travelled without Duval. He gave another servant twenty sous. The latter

led him to the door of Lamiel's room, where, for the first time in her life, she was waiting for him impatiently.

"Eh, come in, my love, tell me, do you love me in spite of this misfortune?" she said, presenting her sick cheek to his kiss.

The Duke was heroic; he kissed it tenderly but was somewhat at a loss for words.

"I give you back your freedom," Lamiel said to him, "go back home, you do not love girls who have blemishes on their cheeks."

"Ah, but I do," said the Duke with a heroic determination. "You have compromised yourself on my account and I shall never abandon you. . . ."

"Really? Is that really true? Well, kiss me again. I will confess to you that it is a blemish which returns every two or three months, especially in Spring. Are you tempted to kiss this cheek?"

It was the first time the Duke felt her responsive to his caresses.

"I have won your love," he said to her as he embraced her with rapture, "but this evil," he

added with astonishment, "robs your skin of none of its freshness and softness."

Lamiel had wet her handkerchief; she pressed it on the altered cheek and threw herself into the Duke's arms. If he had not been so happy and so timid, he would have obtained then and there all he so ardently desired; but when he dared, it was one minute too late.

"At Rouen," Lamiel said firmly, "and not before."

She began to jest with him about his delay, which might have left her at the mercy of the commercial travellers but for the resourcefulness of the young apothecary. The young Duke related the terrible embarrassment he had incurred; he had been clumsy enough to lie and give details. He had spoken to his mother of an excursion to Le Havre to see the sea, arranged with friends from Paris whose names he had given her: the Marquis A., the Vicomte B. The Duchess who knew them all at once wished to be of the party. It was only on the second day that Fédor had been inspired to say that the Vicomte was in bad company: a lady

who showed much talent at the Variétés. . . . The Duchess had immediately cut him short:

"Go alone, or rather, don't go at all. . . ."

He was obliged to spend a half-day in obtaining her permission to go.

"When I haven't Duval by me," he concluded, "I don't know what to say."

"As for me, I'll have none of Duval, I won't have a Fainéant King; I want to see you act of your own accord."

"In that case," said the Duke as he kissed her hand, "I say we reach Rouen at the earliest possible moment."

They ordered horses, and the two lovers reached Rouen on the morrow at five o'clock in the morning.

## XIX

### *Lamiel and Mademoiselle Volnys*

A FORTNIGHT passed, the Duke was perfectly happy. His felicity became daily more intense, but Lamiel was beginning to grow bored. The Duke, who at the Hôtel d'Angleterre went under the simple name of Monsieur Miossens, lavished gifts upon her; but Lamiel, at the end of a week, bought herself clothes suitable for the daughter of a country bourgeois and had the very expensive dresses and hats which betrayed a Parisian lady packed away.

"I do not like to be stared at in the street. I always remember the commercial travellers. I am sure I do not know how to walk like a lady of Paris."

Her fault, in the matter of gallantry, was that she took too little heed of her lover and spoke to him too rarely. She made him her master of literature, she had him read and explain the comedy billed that evening at the play. She saw Mademoiselle Volnys, who was giving one per-

formance at Rouen on her way to Le Havre.

"There goes the woman who can teach me to wear your fine hats without looking as though I had stolen them. Let us leave for Le Havre and I shall study Mademoiselle Volnys at leisure."

"But my mother threatened to come there on her own account. If she sees us, good heavens. . . ."

"Well then, let us go now, come along, let us be off at once." They left immediately.

Lamiel's shrewdness was making giant strides. When she reached Le Havre, she was clever enough to find something inconvenient in all the apartments the porters of the hotels proposed to them at the carriage-door, until one said:

"Mademoiselle Volnys, the leading lady of the Gymnase, has just arrived here."

For a week, Lamiel sat in the stage-box of the theatre observing every move Mademoiselle Volnys made; she spent hours at her half-open door by the stairway of the Hôtel de l'Amirauté to watch Mademoiselle Volnys walk downstairs.

The Duchesse de Miossens came to Le Havre and Fédor was on tenterhooks. One day, while

walking abroad with Lamiel on his arm (truth to tell, she wore a large hat) he saw his mother coming towards him on the fashionable thoroughfare of Le Havre, the Rue de Paris. Lamiel thought he would faint with fear when she insisted that he go bravely past his mother; but that evening, after the play, she agreed to return to Rouen. Poor Fédor, unknown to Lamiel, had gone to call on his mother and beg her pardon for not having dared to bow to her because of the person on his arm. The Duchess received him with a terrifying severity; finally she dismissed him from her presence, chiding him for his insolence in presenting himself without having sought permission to do so.

Lamiel had changed so much that the Duchess, though she saw her plainly, failed to recognize her in spite of her splendid memorable figure. Lamiel was now very graceful indeed; she had lost that air of a young roe about to dart off.

Twice she had written letters to her relatives which the Duke caused to be posted from Orléans; these would serve to confirm the fable about an inheritance she had advised them to circu-

late in the village the day after her departure.

Lamiel spent a month at Rouen; she was thoroughly bored; the Duke had managed to conceive a genuine passion for her; he bored her all the more for it. Lamiel read in his heart only the boredom that was slaying her.

Although she made poor Fédor read to her more than four hours every day, so that he wore out his lungs, Lamiel had not yet succeeded in guessing what caused her ennui. Two or three times, distraite, she surprised herself on the point of questioning the Duke on the cause of her mortal boredom. She stopped in the nick of time.

In her extravagances, Lamiel had recourse to all manner of inventions to amuse herself. One day she made the Duke teach her Geometry. This trait in her character increased his love for her. In all that did not concern the indefeasible rights of the nobility and the advantages it might obtain from the clergy, the study of Geometry had taught this young student of the École Polytechnique to be sparing in his speech. Without discerning all he owed to Geometry, Fédor loved it passionately; he was delighted

with what ease Lamiel understood its elements.

Thanks to her studies and her constant reflection, Lamiel was very different indeed from the young girl who six weeks before had left Carville. She began to find terms to express the thoughts that worried her. She said to herself:

"A girl who runs away from her home is behaving badly; that is so true that she must conceal her escapade. But why do people behave badly? To amuse themselves. For, my part, I am dying of boredom. I am forced to find all manner of reasons to convince myself there is something pleasant in my life. I have the play to go to in the evening and the use of a carriage when it is raining, but at that I must always stroll in the fashionable alley which I know by heart; the Duke considers it ignoble to go for a stroll in the country.

" 'What figure would we cut?' he asks me.

" 'We would cut the figure of people who are enjoying themselves.'

"Then, anxious to vex me, he finds something very base and ignoble in my words.

"He already bored me stiff a week after Jean

Berville had taught me (for money) what love was. But two months of tête-à-tête, God save me! and in this smoky town of Rouen, where I do not know a soul."

Suddenly, inspired:

"When I met him again after being exposed to the politeness of those beasts of commercial travellers playing the Lovelace, he seemed most attractive to me. I must get rid of him for three days."

"My friend," she said, "go and spend three or four days with Madame la Duchesse. I owe her a deal of gratitude; if she were ever to learn that I am responsible for the disorderly life you are leading in Rouen, she might think me ungrateful and I would be in despair."

This idea of ingratitude shocked Fédor; it seemed to him to be in very bad taste; it presupposed a sort of equality; and without ever having reflected upon it, with the logic he had learned from Geometry, he felt instinctively that the niece of a country choirmaster owed every conceivable sort of feeling to a lady of his mother's rank (even if the noble woman had never done her a kind-

ness), and that there was something ridiculous about dragging in the word 'gratitude.' Moreover he felt no desire to go and expose himself to endless lecturing; but since Lamiel repeated her command, he must of course leave.

Lamiel was gay to the point of madness when she found herself alone and rid of the eternally bland phrases of the young Duke. She began by buying herself a pair of sabots; then she went off arm in arm with the landlady's maid.

"Let us wander through the fields, my dear Marthe," she said, "let us escape this eternal boulevard of Rouen, bad cess to it!"

Marthe, seeing her cut across country, following the smallest paths and occasionally pushing through the fields, stopped to enjoy her happiness and said:

"Isn't he coming? It's your lover you're looking for, isn't it?"

"God save me from lovers! I love my liberty better than anything in the world. Haven't you had a lover?"

"Of course I have," answered Marthe in a low voice.

"What do you think of them?"

"I say it's a delightful thing."

"Well, I know nothing so dull. Everybody boasts of love as the greatest of joys; every comedy you go to see is full of people chattering about love; in every tragedy people kill themselves for love. For my part, I would like my lover to be my slave; I'd send him packing at the end of a quarter of an hour."

Marthe stood in her tracks, petrified with astonishment.

"And you, Mademoiselle, with such a handsome lover! Someone was telling Madame the other day that he knew you well, that Monsieur Miossens had taken you away from another lover who allowed you a thousand francs a month."

"I wager that someone was a commercial traveller."

"Why, yes, it was," said Marthe, her eyes widening.

Lamiel burst out laughing.

"And didn't that traveller give you to believe he had enjoyed the honor of my favors?"

"Alas, yes," said Marthe, lowering her eyes.

Lamiel leaned against a tree laughing until she could breathe no longer.

When she returned from Rouen, the young men who had seen her every evening there at the play recognized her. Marthe received two little notes jotted down rapidly in pencil which were pressed into her hand with a coin. She wanted to give them to Lamiel.

"No, keep them," said the latter, "you can give them to Monsieur Miossens when he returns; he will pay you for them."

At the hour of the play, Lamiel for a moment missed the Duke; then she cried:

"Upon my word, no, on due thought I prefer to miss the play than see him arrive with his ceremonious bouquet."

Then she ran to the landlady:

"If I engage a loge, Madame, will you accompany me to the play?"

The landlady at first refused; then she accepted and sent for a hairdresser.

"Well, I have a paradoxical mind," Lamiel mused. She still had her green; she rubbed it on

her cheek. But the loge was on the left of the theatre; she attracted all the glances of the smart public and three notes, this time in ink, were brought to the hotel by midnight. She ran through them with a haste that soon changed to disgust.

"This is not crude like the commercial travellers," she said to herself, "but it is very dull."

Lamiel was perfectly happy; she had practically forgotten the Duke when he reappeared after forty-eight hours. "Already," she said to herself.

She found him mad with love; worse, he spent his time in proving to her, by pretty reasonings, that he was mad with love.

"That means," thought the young peasant girl, "that you are going to be more of a bore than usual."

In effect, this taste of liberty for two days had made Lamiel refractory to boredom.

The next morning, as they rose from bed, he began to kiss her hands again.

"This man is embarrassed at everything that happens to him; as soon as he has to attend to something personally he is a man in two volumes; he needs a Duval."

Lamiel sent him to run errands, to pay the hotel bill. At her command, they sent for carpenters who made boxes for all the pretty things the Duke had given her. She packed the Duke's things and her own. Then, looking through the window, she saw him returning to the hotel at about four o'clock. She went down to meet him, and persuaded him to take her to dine at B——, a village on the Seine.

On their return from B—— they went directly to the play. At the stroke of eight, Lamiel said to the Duke:

"Keep the loge and wait for me, I am taking the carriage. I shall be gone only a second by your watch."

She ran to the hotel, had the Duke's trunks shipped to Cherbourg; the coach that took them away left at half past eight. She had her own boxes carried to the Paris stage. Fédor had three thousand one hundred francs; she put one thousand five hundred and fifty francs in the boxes addressed to Cherbourg, and one thousand five hundred and fifty francs in her own. While playing with him, she had stolen his purse.

## XX

## *Paris*

It would be difficult to depict the ecstasies of happiness Lamiel felt as the coach drove off to Paris. Buried in one corner, she laughed and stamped with joy as she imagined the Duke's embarrassment on returning to the hotel and finding neither mistress nor money nor belongings. During the first few hours, Lamiel was somewhat afraid of seeing Fédor gallop up on a post-horse. She had thought of a resource against this accident; she would pretend that she did not know him. Moreover, she had been careful at the hotel to leave them under the impression that she was taking the Bayeux coach; indeed, it was along this road that Fédor pursued her.

All in all, that journey by night, running away from so amiable and polite a lover, proved the happiest moment in Lamiel's life. She was some-

what afraid of the Paris robbers; as she climbed down from the stage-coach, she was unluckily inspired to try to make people believe she knew Paris: she asked for a large hotel the name of which she affected to have forgotten. As a result she was sent to the Hotel de X—— in the Rue de Rivoli and assigned to an apartment on the fourth floor costing five hundred francs monthly.

Somewhat astonished at the quantity of servants and the luxury of this establishment, she had called upon the proprietress of the hotel, asking with an air of mystery and a plea for secrecy for the address of a good physician. An anecdote the Duke told her gave her the idea of this ruse.

On the morrow, she paid another visit to the proprietress of the hotel.

"Madame," she said to her, "I have never been to Paris before. What I fear above all, since I have no maid, is to be followed on the streets; I would like to dress like a modest bourgeoise; would you do me the great favor of accompanying me while I buy a complete wardrobe of this sort?"

The landlady admired this young girl, clad in

the costliest of clothes, who wished to transform herself into a simple bourgeoise. A circumstance increased Madame Le Grand's astonishment: Lamiel was hot as she entered Madame Le Grand's boudoir, she took out her handkerchief and removed almost all the color that disfigured her cheek. Madame Le Grand alive with curiosity observed Lamiel carefully; she studied the young girl's passport and treated her with so much kindness that, the very next day, Lamiel confessed: out of patience with the attentions of travellers, especially those of the commercial variety, she had profited by the advice given to her by another traveller, an apothecary by profession, and had painted her cheek with green of holly.

Two days later, the entire hotel was lost in admiration for this tall young girl, whose movements were somewhat loose-jointed but who boasted so fine a figure and who used such singular cosmetics. Madame Le Grand did her the favor of having a letter, addressed to Monsieur de Miossens, at X——, thrown into the mail-box at Saint Quentin. It was couched in these terms:

*Cher ami,*

*or rather Monsieur le Duc:*

*I admired in you your perfect manners; your boundless kindnesses almost deprive me of the courage of saying a word that you most certainly would not allow me to utter and one which seems cruel to me yet necessary to your happiness and your peace of mind. You are perfect, but your attentions bore me. I would prefer, I believe, a simple peasant who would not be eternally spinning delicate webs of compliments and seeking to please me. It seems to me that I would love a man of frank humor and, above all, one who was not polite. I left your boxes and one thousand five hundred and fifty francs at Cherbourg as I passed by.*

This was quite enough to make Fédor dash away on the road to Cherbourg, riding at full speed and scanning every face along the highroad. In spite of Lamiel's letter, he did not abandon the folly of seeking her which had occupied him since her flight. At Rouen, finding himself without money,

mistress and linen, he had been on the point of blowing his brains out. Never had a man found himself so cruelly vexed. All Lamiel's expectations were fulfilled.

As for Lamiel, she would have entirely forgotten this young man who had stifled love with his tender attentions, had he not served as a criterion by which she might judge other men.

Lamiel had such naturalness and gaiety in her manners that Madame Le Grand became attached to her; they were constant companions; soon she found her boudoir tedious when she did not see the young girl there. It was useless for her husband to preach to her on the imprudence of admitting a stranger to this degree of intimacy, Madame Le Grand had no answer for him, but her friendship for our heroine increased. Several spendthrift young men lived in the hotel; they paid their court to Madame Le Grand, who was by no means annoyed at their presence in her boudoir. She noticed with pleasure and caused her husband also to notice that their mere presence was enough to seal

Lamiel's lips. Certainly the girl had no desire to push herself forward.

Lamiel's sole passion at the time was curiosity; there never was on earth a being more inquisitive; here, perhaps, was the reason for Madame Le Grand's friendship, since she took pleasure in answering and explaining so many things. But Lamiel already understood that a girl must be timid; she never went out in the evening. She missed the play bitterly, but the memory of the commercial travellers made her prudent.

Lamiel saw the necessity of telling her story to Madame Le Grand, but, in order to do so, she had to invent it; she distrusted her light-headedness; it was utterly impossible for her to lie because she would forget the lies she told. She wrote her story, and, wishing to leave it on her dressing-table, she expressed this story in epistolary form: a letter of justification addressed to an uncle, Monsieur de Bonia.

She told Madame Le Grand she was the second daughter of a Sub-Prefect whom she might not

name. This government official, crazed with ambition, hoped to be included in the first class of Prefects; he was able to refuse nothing to a widower of means, affiliated to the Congrégation, who promised him twenty-one rallied Legitimist votes. But this gentleman, Monsieur de Tourte, offered his twenty-one votes only on condition he marry Lamiel. Lamiel, for her part, detested his yellow, mock-pious face.

"It's quite simple," said Madame Le Grand, "my poor Lamiel one day saw a handsome young man, who for all fortune has only expectations."

"Eh, but no, no," cried Lamiel. "I would be less bored and I would know what to do with my life. Love, which apparently makes the sovereign happiness of all the world, appears to me to be a truly insipid, and, I dare hazard, a very tedious affair."

"Which means that you have been loved by a bore, eh?"

"I am compromising myself," Lamiel thought, "I must return to the truth."

"No," she added with the simplest air in the world, "I have, to be sure, been courted; my first lover was called Berville; and he loved nothing but money. The other, called the Duke, was very lavish, but the finest day of my life was when I made it impossible for him to see me again. An uncle had left me one thousand five hundred and fifty francs; these were to be taken to the notary's on the morrow. I asked if I might see these fine golden napoleons and the thousand franc note at close range. It was eight o'clock in the evening, my father had gone out to campaign for his election; for my part, I ran away through the garden of the Sub-Prefecture with the three trunks which had just brought one part of my wedding trousseau from Paris, for Monsieur de Tourte is as generous as he is ugly, which is saying a great deal. But my father will repay him for these dresses which pleased me. As soon as elections in our district are over and the list of Prefects is announced in the *Moniteur,* my father will be so happy, if he is elected Prefect, that he will pardon me anything. It will be much more difficult if he remains Sub-

Prefect. This Monsieur de Tourte is all-powerful over public opinion in our district; his father is Vicar-General."

The following evening, Lamiel was urged to repeat her story to the kindly Monsieur Le Grand; she re-read the letter to her uncle. She had forgotten to explain the passport; she said:

"A Sub-Prefect, stationed six leagues away from our house, who wooed me but whose suit Monsieur de Tourte caused to be refused, promised me a passport through one of his relatives, a Mayor twenty-five leagues away, somewhere near Rennes."

This story won Monsieur Le Grand's sympathy and moved him to tears; for a week it furnished the topic of conversation in the evening. The second day she knew her, Madame Le Grand had told her protégée she loved her like her daughter.

"Fifteen hundred and fifty francs is all you own, and you rent an apartment costing five hundred francs; I shall give you one at one hundred and fifty in which you will do quite as comfortably; but I insist on seeing you wear your pretty dresses.

I shall take you to Monsieur Servières' house Tuesday; here you will meet young cavaliers with ten thousand crowns' income; you will make conquests which will prove of greater advantage than your ugly old Monsieur de Tourte with his twenty-one rallied Legitimist votes in his pocket."

"Well then, my dear friend," Lamiel resumed, "allow me to take a dancing-master, for I feel I do not walk or enter a room like other people; allow me, too, to take you sometimes to the Théâtre Français."

## XXI

### *Count d'Aubigné-Nerwinde*

One evening Lamiel was still in Madame Le Grand's apartment at midnight; to amuse herself, she had undertaken to please her fat husband; she was studying this man's complete absence of imagination. Suddenly they heard a great noise in the street and then at the door of the hotel. One of the young lodgers of the house was being carried home dead-drunk.

"Ah, it's the Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde again," cried Madame Le Grand.

He was what people in Paris call a very amiable young man; at present he was blithely engaged in dissipating a fortune of eighty thousand pounds a year left him by the worthy General d'Aubigné, so celebrated in the Napoleonic wars. He had only come into his money three years before; already

he found himself reduced to living in lodgings. He had had to sell his house.

That evening d'Aubigné's drunkenness consisted in chattering ceaselessly and in refusing to go up to his apartment.

"What is the use of walking up two flights of stairs when I shall have to walk down them tomorrow?"

At no time had Madame Le Grand, who undertook to get him safely to his rooms, been able to elicit any other answer from him. The two servants who had brought him home went away; he threatened to beat with his fists—in the English fashion—the hotel-servants who got on his nerves and who asked permission of Madame not to be forced to deal with such a disagreeable creature. The Count seized the word on the fly:

"Oh, no indeed, no indeed, she is not a disagreeable creature; I notice that she keeps quiet as soon as I come into Madame Le Grand's apartment, but no matter, there is something odd, something original about that young girl. I want to develop her, yes, d'Aubigné wants to develop her. With those

great strides she takes, she will make me blush when I give her my arm; she does not know how to wear a shawl; but damme! I shall win her favor or die in the attempt. I have pleased so many other women . . . Yes, but that's the point: this filly is not like the others, and they're telling me to go upstairs and I refuse to act like anyone else. Everyone else goes upstairs, but I shan't go upstairs. Am I right, Madame Le Grand, or am I not? What is the good of walking upstairs when I shall have to walk downstairs tomorrow morning?"

This chattering lasted a good hour. Madame Le Grand was very much embarrassed; she had been lady's maid to a noblewoman; she possessed such a store of politeness, especially towards a young man who was personally ruining himself in the grand manner, that she would not have treated the Count violently for anything in the world. Yet after all he must go to bed and she thought of waking up the handy-man and the kitchen-men when the Count began to explain for the second time his intentions concerning Lamiel.

Then Madame Le Grand called the young girl, who had taken to flight when she heard her name being repeated; she begged her to order the Comte d'Aubigné to go up to his room.

"But my dear Madame, remember that tomorrow Monsieur le Comte will consider himself authorized, because I have spoken to him, to address me."

"Tomorrow he will remember nothing and he will come and beg my pardon. I know him; this is not the first time he has returned home in this condition. I really shall have to invite him politely but firmly to move to another hotel. He is as high as the clouds, he treats the servants familiarly; that is why they refuse to carry him up to his apartment."

"Does he get drunk very often, then?" said Lamiel.

"Every day, I believe; his life is a tissue of follies; he would wish to appear as the maddest of all the dandies who shine in the loges of the Opera. The other day (he was not as full as he is this evening) he took it into his head to belabor the coach-

man, who was bringing him home, unmercifully with his cane."

"Ah, here is no pretty doll like my duke."

The vision of the Count drubbing the coachman who drove him home pleased Lamiel hugely; Madame Le Grand having repeated her entreaties, she advanced to the stairway and said firmly.

"Monsieur le Comte d'Aubigné, go up to Number 12 instantly."

"D'Aubigné ceased speaking, looked at her fixedly and said:

"There is sound talk for you. All the others say to me: Go to your rooms. This wise person, new to the game and redolent of the provinces, thinks I have forgotten the number of my apartment. She says to me: 'Go up to Number 12.' Well, that is what I call perfect politeness. Shall it be said of d'Aubigné that he resists the orders of a pretty woman? . . . of a woman who for the immediate moment happens to be without a lover? . . . Never! . . . Never! Mademoiselle Lamiel, I obey you: I go up to Number 12. . . . Not to Number 11, nor, by the same token, to Number 13 (faugh!

13 is an unlucky number!). Yes, I am going up to Number 12 and nowhere else."

Madame Le Grand handed him his candle; he took it and climbed resolutely up the stairs to Number 12, repeating twenty times that he had nothing to refuse to a lady who, for the immediate moment, happened to be without a lover.

The next day, clad in a magnificent dressing-gown, the Comte d'Aubigné lounged in a deep arm-chair:

"Well, scoundrel," he said to the first servant of the hotel who came into his room, "tell me what I did yesterday when I came home merrily three sheets in the wind."

"I have already told you," the man replied in the crude angry tone of a servant, "that I shall not answer you when you address me thus."

The Count threw him a five-franc piece; the servant picked it up and raised his arm as though to throw it at the Count's head.

"Well, well," said the Count laughing affectedly as he remembered Firmin, of the Théâtre Française (a rôle of Moncade's).

"I do not know what prevents me from throwing it in your face," said the servant growing pale, "but I am afraid of breaking Madame's porcelain-ware."

The servant turned around towards the open window, looked out a moment, then threw the coin out; crossing the entire Rue de Rivoli, it went bounding against the grille of the Terrasse des Feuillants where twenty urchins fought over it. This spectacle apparently calmed the servant who said to the Count with all the superiority of reason and of physical force:

"If you intended to retain your insolent manners, you should have managed to keep your own unfortunate servants who tolerated them; you should not have placed yourself in a position where you fear to be sent to the Debtor's Prison at Clichy. But fear of Clichy reduced you to make a pretended sale to Madame of the furniture and mirrors with which you have littered this room. If you wish to be a great lord, you must begin by not being poor. What would your father, good General d'Aubigné, say if he saw you fallen so low

as to be afraid to venture out before sunset?"

"Well, my dear Georges, since you refused to take the first crown, here is a second one to pay for your good counsel."

Georges took the crown. He would have allowed a general of the Empire to kick him, so sacred is the memory of Napoleon among the people who retain no memory of the Republic, for no grandeur can exist for them without a sovereign. The Count was delighted at the turn his insolence had taken. He was the sort of man who grew bored whenever he had not something to do; his heart furnished him with absolutely no resource.

"Now I must think about Madame Le Grand. Shall I treat the venerable retired lady's maid with a lofty fatuity, with the haughtiness that attaches to my past fortune? Or ought I be affable and jolly? Yes, by God, I shall be affable!" cried the Count, "I had completely forgotten the tall Mademoiselle Lamiel whom I must possess! Who can the girl be? Has she already someone? Or is she really a girl from the provinces, fleeing from the wrath of her family? If she is quite stupid, my

drunkenness of yesterday evening shocked her. Good humor and gaiety are therefore the order of the day; the old Le Grand will preach me a sermon but I shall know something about Lamiel."

The Count, whose ideas were gradually clearing up, went downstairs clad in his magnificent dressing-gown.

"My dear Madame Le Grand, my kind friend, I wonder if you would make me a little tea rather quickly and tell me something about what I may have done and said yesterday evening when I came home? Ah, Mademoiselle Lamiel," he said, feigning to perceive her for the first time and bowing to her with profound respect, "I would give two thousand-franc notes had you retired last night before eleven o'clock. We sat down at table at eight o'clock, I remember I heard the clocks strike ten, but after that, my mind is a desert, I can see nothing in it."

"Upon my word, Monsieur le Comte, I am in despair at having to say the most disagreeable things to you. None of the servants is willing to

carry you upstairs now; you have offended them all. Surely I cannot dismiss satisfactory fellows because they refuse to lend themselves to services for which they are not employed. Monsieur Le Grand joins me in begging you to seek lodgings elsewhere. What stranger can fail to have a bad opinion of my hotel when he hears a scene like last night's? You spoke without stopping and about matters that are scarcely proper."

"I was speaking about love, I wager! Nothing interests me in life, neither horses nor gaming; I am very different indeed from other young men; if I have not a tender heart with whom I may live in perfect intimacy, I grow bored; then, to seek distraction, I allow myself to be invited out to dine and as I have nothing to fill my heart. . . ."

"Ah, scoundrel," cried Madame Le Grand abandoning her serious air, "it is because other ears are here to listen to you that you dare to speak of sentiment. Have you the effrontery to sit up there and tell me that you love anything but a fine horse or a well-tailored suit of fashionable color which will

give you a fine air, in the morning, when you stroll in the Bois de Boulogne, or in the evening, in your loge at the Opéra or in the wings?"

"You tell me, my excellent hostess, to take an apartment and servants of my own. Do you believe, then, that it is for his pleasure that a d'Aubigné-Nerwinde lives in an inn, be it ever so well-kept and the model of all places of the sort? But you forget that I am ruined for the moment. Do I know if two months from now I shall be able to manage even two wretched rooms? But fortunately Heaven has preserved in me the character of my forefathers. My cousin, Madame de Maintenon, born in prison, married an ignoble humbug, one Scarron; yet this did not prevent her from dying as the wife of the greatest king who ever sat on the throne of France. Well, there are days when my prison bores me, for, in all good faith, are not a hotel, be it ever so comfortable, and servants who refuse to obey me, a prison for me? And can you reproach me for letting myself go in a moment of drunkenness which allows me to forget all my misfortunes? I am only too serious in this moment

of poverty; I have the misfortune of being in love to the point of madness; and I know myself, love is not a superannuated pleasantry, it is a consuming and terrible passion. It is the love of the chevaliers of the Middle Ages which leads to great actions."

Lamiel blushed deeply, the Count noticed it.

"This beautiful body belongs to me," he mused, "What a sensation she will make at the Opéra if I can dress her properly. Careful, d'Aubigné; it's a young gazelle you are trying to put in a pen; she must not jump over the barriers. Let us be prudent!"

To her he appeared as a brilliant and amazing young man; yet he did not say a single word he had not learned by heart; indeed he made a deeper impression for it; all his movements of eloquence were previously calculated and rehearsed in such a way as to strike one by their brilliant contrast—fine passages ranging from the most fetching insouciance to the most tender and moving originality. He noted the effect he was producing on this young girl who remained speechless, seated in one

corner of the boudoir, but whose color heightened when the Count brought out the high lights of his unhappy condition. Madame Le Grand's reproaches and counsel offered him the most plausible occasion to speak of himself; he made the best of it. He knew he was holding the keen interest of Madame Le Grand, former lady's maid in a household of quality (Madame la Comtesse de Damas'), a woman accustomed to respect and admire rich young men whose behavior and treatment of the world and fortune were exactly those of Monsieur le Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde.

## XXII

## *The Pistol-shot*

D'AUBIGNÉ was a copy of the young noblemen who died of old age under Charles X. These old men were armed with pretentiousness; they uttered merciless maxims which happily they did not have the strength to apply. D'Aubigné was not a careless and gay young *nobleman,* but he was, according to a certain amiable aristocrat, a careless and gay young *man.* Lamiel had not sufficient experience in life to establish this difference; she had much intelligence because she had a noble soul, but it was not the intelligence of comparison and study; she was far from possessing ability to judge herself or others.

Seated in a corner and plunged in a silence tense with emotion, she compared d'Aubigné with the Duc de Miossens incessantly and proved very unjust towards that poor young man; it had been

especially his air of naturalness, his total lack of imagination, his simple way of expressing the most decisive things, and, to put it in a nutshell, his perfect tone which injured him in the eyes of his ex-mistress. The genuinely simple and natural manners of this amiable young man she called timidity and extreme prudence, while the tinsel manners of the Count seemed to her to reflect the most energetic character; she pictured him rushing forward, with truly chivalric courage, into the uncertainty of events.

The next day, the Count, who was lying in wait for her behind his half-open door, ventured to speak to her as she made her way to her room upstairs. She answered him coldly and to the point, but did not appear shocked at his action. Lamiel bore the *naturalness* of her character written upon her brow.

"She is mine," said the Count to himself, "but how shall I dress her? The girl has no clothes. God knows what there is in the two large boxes I saw them carrying up to her room. I am not paying court to her for the purpose of tasting pleasure ob-

scurely in a hotel bedroom like a law-student. I shall not wear out my strength ignobly and inconspicuously. If I desire her, it is to make a show of my luxury, to display her at the Opéra and at the Bois de Boulogne, to introduce a novelty, and, when I have to tell her history, to do so with the utmost relish and piquancy. I need at least four thousand francs to make her fit to walk on my arm. No, Mademoiselle, your virtue appears in a hurry to be eclipsed, but you will have this pleasure only when I, d'Aubigné, can get together four thousand francs. For gifts must fall like lightning the day after your conquest; and from the outset you must believe that you are dealing with an opulent young lord with money to burn, such as I was two years ago."

While d'Aubigné was meditating prudently (prudence was his forte) Lamiel was highly pleased: she believed him the maddest and most natural of young men:

"This man isn't a tedious monotonous little Cato like the Duke."

The Count studied all his entrances into the ho-

tel; he was very sure Lamiel sat in Madame Le Grand's boudoir on the ground floor, which had a fine window under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli and a casement over the stairway. At twenty paces from the hotel he assumed an idle gait. But his prudence was defeated by circumstances.

He had collected about a hundred louis to equip his future mistress; he was already debating under what name he would have her make her début in the Bois de Boulogne. The admirable freshness, the velvety softness of Lamiel's complexion had determined him to bring her out first in the broad daylight of the Bois de Boulogne rather than under the lamps of the Opéra; he hoped to find a further credit of a hundred louis or a thousand crowns among the merchants, when the day of the Chantilly races approached. Unfortunately he thought of it only a week before.

"It is too late for me to take sick," he said to himself angrily as he struck his forehead, "d'Eberley and Montandan have exhausted that resource."

He fell into an armchair and said to Lamiel with a heartfelt air:

"I adore you and you are plunging me into despair."

The same day, Madame Le Grand drew attention to his profound sadness. But his speech missed its effect utterly; it was tarnished with lassitude. The Duke, who had bored her so, had nevertheless told her this a hundred times better. If at this moment Lamiel had possessed the talent of reading in her own heart, she would have said to the Count:

"You please me, but only on condition you never speak the language of passion to me."

The Count was wracked by the idea of Chantilly and still quite undecided when, that evening at the Jockey Club, they spoke of a young man, one of his friends, who was dodging Chantilly by feigning illness.

"Grasp all, lose all!" he said to himself. "The devil with this little provincial girl! I am lost, considering the rumors about my affairs, if, with my passion for horses, I am not seen at Chantilly."

The eve of the great day, he said to Lamiel:

"I shall try to break my neck, since your cruelty makes my life unbearable."

These words scandalized Lamiel.

"How in the world does he make me out cruel?" she said to herself laughing. "Has he ever placed me in a position to refuse him anything serious?"

As a matter of fact the company of any woman bored the Count. Lamiel, who was still a thoroughly honest woman, bored him even more. He therefore pressed his suit by making speeches; in his entire life, he had not spent five minutes in tête-à-tête with her; his art was to make Lamiel believe that he was dying to speak to her while Lamiel's cruelty was robbing him of a chance for this happiness.

Lamiel, very much indifferent to what is called love and its pleasures, said to herself:

"If I have a liaison with the Count, he will take me to the play. My fifteen hundred francs are sadly impaired; but the Count cannot give me money for he has none."

"There is no change in my family," she would say to Madame Le Grand, "the elections have been postponed; Monsieur de Tourte is more powerful than ever; that Liberal Monsieur X——, the Edi-

tor of the *Commerce*, who lives on the sixth floor, tells me that the Congrégation will come back to power. What can I do to earn my living? I have only eight hundred francs left."

Lamiel subscribed to two lending-libraries and spent her days reading. She almost never ventured to go out for a walk or ride in an omnibus alone. The green spots on her left cheek no longer produced a sure effect. She was so beautifully built, her eyes were so bright that she had almost daily to repulse advances that were often downright rude. She allowed herself to speak only to Madame Le Grand and to Monsieur Y——, her dancing-master, a good, honest, mediocre young man who had not failed to fall in love with his pupil and to whom Madame le Grand had confided the circumstances of Lamiel's Sub-Prefect father, Monsieur de Tourte and the rest of the story.

This mode of life was far from amusing; her inability to take exercise proved harmful to Lamiel's health and the impossibility of going to the play crowned her boredom. D'Aubigné's fatuity was on the verge of triumphing had he given La-

miel more opportunities to speak frankly; she had so little vanity that she would have laid bare her heart in the first fit of uncontrolled impatience he would have surprised in her.

Things had reached this pass on the day of the Chantilly races. The Count went; he lost seventeen thousand francs in wagers. He completed his ruin, exhausted all the credit still granted him and nobly paid the sum before the end of the week. At bottom, the Comte de'Aubigné-Nerwinde was prudent and wise to the point of avarice.

"There are already two or three judgments against me which can land me in Clichy; I owe it to myself to possess this little girl from the provinces; once this duty is accomplished, I must disappear in the grand manner. I shall go and spend my time at Versailles; I am known by the poor devils who yawn and twiddle their thumbs in this sad town in company with ruined Englishmen. Good God! what evenings I shall spend!"

Lamiel was bored to death, the Count needed but two days' attentions to accomplish his purpose.

"Will you take me to the play this evening?" Lamiel asked him.

"This evening, if my business is arranged, I expect to blow my brains out."

Lamiel uttered a cry, the Count was delighted at the effect he was producing.

"My last thought is of you, fair Lamiel, for you will have been my last happiness. If a week ago you had been less cruel towards me, I would not have gone to the races at Chantilly, where I lost seventeen thousand francs. I paid my debts as my honor demanded by exhausting all my resources! I have not a single thousand-franc note left. But the Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde, the son of a hero celebrated from one end of France to the other, must not let people see him in an inferior position. To be sure, I have a sort of sister, a very rich woman, twenty years older than I, but her outlook on life is very narrow, she is scarce fit to understand a life governed by love and chance. Anyhow she married a Miossens and I am only a d'Aubigné-Nerwinde."

"A Miossens? Related to the Duke?"

"Her great uncle. But how do you know the name?"

Lamiel blushed.

"Monsieur de Tourte, my fiancé, spoke forever of the Miossens; their agent furnished him with four votes."

Lamiel already knew how to lie moderately well, but she still insisted too much; she failed to tell a lie as though it were a thing of no consequence; she still had much to learn. What made her lie was a maxim which Madame Le Grand often repeated to her since they had become confidantes: "Be rich if you can, proper if you will, but be respected, that is essential."

Her intimacy with the Count lasted half a day; by evening Lamiel already found in him an aridity of heart which cut her words short. His speech displayed a great dignity but that dignity cost him many an effort; Lamiel perceived this effort though she could not have told what caused her boredom. But she felt he was the antithesis of that young scatterbrain she had imagined him to be and whom

she really loved as the exact contrary of the young Duke. The notion of a suicidal pistol-shot soon scattered her boredom, for she believed everything that smacked of the extraordinary. She looked at d'Aubigné:

"Can this cold, handsome, patrician face be that of a man about to kill himself in a few hours? He acts with a perfect sang-froid."

The Count was packing his trunks, he seemed absorbed in not spoiling his clothes; proud of his skill in packing his trunks, he was very much the commercial traveller at this moment; but Lamiel saw nothing, her soul was wholly moved by this pistol-shot to be fired so soon. The Count addressed his trunks to his sister. He accompanied them to the Périgueux stage, and, from the Coach offices, had them transported to Versailles in a hired truck. The following morning Madame Le Grand received the legendary letter:

"When you read these words from . . ."

Lamiel lowered her head as she heard the words and was soon choking with sobs. Monsieur Le Grand cried:

"But that's sixteen hundred and seventy-six francs we have lost!" and he set to drawing up the Count's *real* bill; the bill he had made out was for sixteen hundred and seventy-seven francs, the bill for the money d'Aubigné really owed was no more than nine hundred.

"Last year our losses were four per cent of our total income; this year they will be six per cent, for I do not mention the value of the poor Count's furniture nor of his pictures because he will perhaps have disposed of them in his will."

All this discussion plunged Lamiel into the depths of gloom. To be sure she felt no love for the Count; the sentiment that wrung her heart was simply one of humanity.

## XXIII

### *The Hatter of Périgueux*

At Versailles, surrounded by a society that was devout and that grumbled at everything, the Count was dying of boredom; but he was above all prudent and a trait of prudence corrected his fortune. To be well received in spite of his poverty which was beginning to show through his ostentation, he had decided to pay his court to an aged Marquise, Madame de Sassenage, one of the staunchest supporters of the Congrégation in that district. The harshness and acrid vanity of her character kept the Marquise occupied. She was rarely bored; to bind d'Aubigné and force him to pay court to her, this Marquise plotted making him enter the Church. The Count, who knew how to exploit his name with a rare ability, said gravely to her:

"In that case, the Nerwindes are extinguished; I am the last of the name and I owe it to the glory of my father and to the memory France preserves

of this hero, a friend of Jourdain's, to consult my sister on so important a step."

The Marquise de Sassenage felt duty-bound to see that these words were reported to the Baroness, who was still sick and whose deep devotion had opened the salons of the old nobility of Périgueux to her through her director of conscience. This director happened also to be sick; it was the Bishop of X—— who went in person to speak to this important and rich bigot. The Bishop belonged to a good family of Béarn, he numbered among his forefathers a *cordon rouge* under Louis XV. He happened to stir her pity for the fall of the nobility; such emotion proved the most agreeable flattery imaginable to the Baroness; this man of such lofty antecedents considered her a member of the true nobility!

Two days later the Baroness drew up a new will; she left all her fortune to her brother Ephraim, Comte de Nerwinde, whom she had cursed so bitterly. Her fortune might amount to almost a million; she made but one stipulation; she insisted her brother marry before he reached the age of forty.

A few days later, pity for his title working havoc on her impetuous imagination, the Baroness sent her brother, with whom she had been at daggers drawn for two years, a bill of exchange for six thousand francs. She announced she would grant him a like sum as yearly allowance and gave him to understand he would be her heir.

The Count received this letter at four o'clock, as he was setting out to dine at the house of the Marquise de Sassenage who was waiting for him. He did not lose two seconds in pleasure or surprise. Hearts dominated by vanity have an instinctive fear of emotion; it is for them the highroad to ridicule.

"How can I make out of this," he wondered, "a piquant anecdote which will redound to my honor at the Club?"

He set out for Paris, ran up to Lamiel's room, and, without deigning to answer the cry of the kindly Madame Le Grand, he opened Lamiel's door with a crash and threw himself at her feet.

"I owe you my life," he cried to Lamiel, "my passion for you made me fire the pistol I had just

loaded into the air. As soon as I calmed down, thinking of your divine charms, I let my sister know the state of my fortune. The blood of the Nerwindes could not but assert itself; she sent me a bundle of letters of exchange and you still have time to dress before the Opéra."

The idea of the Opéra and of being there in an hour soon made our heroine forget the sad picture of the Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde with a bullet through his brain. They went in to various shops where the young girl from the provinces changed her dress, hat and scarf. On the way to the Opéra, the Count said:

"Your Sub-Prefect father frightens me. If he succeeds in getting elected, they will not refuse him an order to regain possession of a rebellious daughter. Then what would become of my love?" he added coldly.

Lamiel looked at him, smiling.

"Call yourself Madame de Saint-Serve. I choose the name because I have in my possession an excellent passport made out in this name for travel abroad."

"But then I inherit the lady's fine behavior—and what behavior!"

"She was a young girl less beautiful than you but she too had a very dangerous father; she was about to leave, we considered it more prudent to have her name go on her lover's passport as his wife. That sort of thing bears weight abroad."

The resurrection of the Count created a sensation at the Opéra; he was at the height of his happiness. Madame de Saint-Serve had all the success imaginable.

On the following day, Nerwinde went into hiding and his friends treated with his creditors. All those among them who did not frequent the Opéra believed him dead.

On leaving the Opéra, the Count had taken Lamiel to a little apartment in the Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins.

"If you will take my word for it," he had said to Lamiel who was delighted with the Opéra, "you will not see Madame Le Grand again. She might say that Madame de Saint-Serve is not unacquainted with Mademoiselle Lamiel! Write down on a piece

of paper what you think you owe her and tomorrow a stranger will go to pay her and present her your compliments."

That evening, from seven to midnight, Nerwinde, riddled with debts, facing the consequences of four decisions on the morrow condemning him to the Prison of Clichy, with for only possession in the world a draft for six thousand francs which he showed to nobody, bought everything that goes to make up the toilette of the most brilliant woman; the shopkeepers thanked him, for, as he bought in their shops, he had a way of making them think he was doing them a favor.

There lay the triumph of his character—cold, measured, ever calculating and fearing nothing in the world except a physical hurt to his beloved person or a moral wound to his egregious vanity. This timid, cold character had been formed by a period of vanity and ennui; before 1789 he would have appeared majestically tedious; this character of the cold, pretentious Gascon can be found in the contemporary theatre.

The women of our day no longer having a

word to say, Nerwinde, little disposed to please them, owed the brilliance of his reputation to two duels, and, above all, to a small mournful eye whose audacity appeared irresistible. His features, somewhat Mongolian but noble, were redeemed from a common appearance only by their coldness, their profound amiability and their appearance of sadness or rather of physical pain. Being naturally impervious to expression, they never said anything save what he would have them say; they concealed admirably the frequent bitterness of a soul icy but passionately egotistical; the slightest prospect of suffering for his beloved person weighed on the Count so heavily that it drew tears from his eyes. Monsieur de Menton had said of him:

"He is a chess-player whom the public in its stupidity takes for a poet."

The Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde fitted especially well in a company of twenty people because of his serious mien, his prudence, his moroseness, his unflagging awareness of the public, and his countenance which was that of a wolf lurking by the roadside waiting for the sheep to file by. He spoke

with an effort and a search for elegance that offended people of delicate sensibilities, but he had a passion for speaking and telling anecdotes, and, being somewhat crude by nature, he did not sense his failures.

This passion for speaking and telling anecdotes, for being correct about everything, submitted him to excruciating torture if anyone told the merest tale in front of him. He had certain sour objections to make about everything that was said which prevented the slightest conversation from progressing in his presence. To be intimate with him was a torment. His expression of suffering or at least his dismal and easily offended exterior admitted no sallies of wit or other pleasures of social intercourse—sallies which form the amenities of French conversation and always require a certain degree of confidence in the hearers on whose *amour-propre* they most often play.

Whatever indulgent philosophy and desire of friendly relations an interlocutor might possess, the Count's eternal contradictions reared an ob-

stacle to conversation on even the most simple of matters.

Lamiel was as yet unable to realize all this. Kindly, simple, gay, happy, without a shred of malice in the depths of her heart, she could not guess what caused the displeasure of his life; she was delighted with the rôle the Count made her play and the high position he made her fill in society. She could not have shown such wit, brilliance and subtlety in conversation if she had not been listened to with a religious attention. Unless the audience is attentive at the outset, the speaker must strike hard, as in repartee in farce dialogue on the stage.

"To what do I owe this expectant kindliness, even from people who come to our dinners for the first time? Solely to the consideration the Count has acquired for himself. But apparently the efforts he makes to do so tire him; hence his testiness in our intimate conversations. As we return home, all my contentment vanishes; as soon as he is alone with me, he becomes rough, almost insulting, he

who is so ceremoniously polite in social life; it is as though I committed a fault in speaking a word to him, even if I ask his opinion."

All these observations, sensed rather than clearly expressed, crowded in on Lamiel, as she looked at her hair in the mirror before putting on her curl-papers.

"Only a moment ago, as I took off my hat, I had a smile on my lips," she said to herself, "and now I have a hangdog expression, I have to exert myself not to be angry. And it is the same thing every evening. Apparently this extremely imposing man is tired of his struggle to maintain his authority in society and when tired he becomes irritable."

She ran to her room and locked herself in.

Though only a week had passed since their first evening at the Opéra, Lamiel had the spontaneous courage of perfectly natural characters.

"What is the meaning of this?" the Count cried in a harsh voice as he heard the noise of the door closing.

To amuse herself, Lamiel imitated the rough and insulting tones of her noble lover:

"It means," she cried to him through the door, "that I am tired of your noble presence."

"Well, then, upon my word, all the better," said Nerwinde to himself, "why should I lose my temper with a woman who everyone can plainly see is my creature? The essential is that, with her face and the wit I instill in her, she should do me honor in society. I shall certainly punish her, the little chit; I shall wait until she calls me into her room and, most important of all, she shall never see me put out by her strange folly."

The reader will perhaps wonder what was the moral basis of the Count's strange character. Pretentiousness, a fatal pretentiousness, one of the chief causes of the melancholy of the Nineteenth Century. Nerwinde was perishing of fear lest the genuineness of his Count's title be questioned.

It was the misfortune of a character apparently so firm, in the first place to be weak to the point of pusillanimity: the simplest and most infrequent jest, one which lack of wit condemned to die at birth, kept him angry for a week. In the second place, Monsieur d'Aubigné-Nerwinde completely

forgot his glorious father, known throughout France and all Europe, General Boucaud, Comte de Nerwinde, and thought forever of his grandfather Boucaud, a little hatter of Périgueux.

Is such excess of pride, of susceptibility, of weakness credible? The least jest made about tradespeople, worse, the words of a man who said in his presence: "I have just bought a hat," made him look deep in the eyes of one who took the liberty of saying so strange a thing, and put him out of temper for an entire day. The problem posed was as follows:

"Am I to let this piquant trait go by or else must I be angry?"

From the age of sixteen, Nerwinde was wracked by the sentence: *A little hatter established in one of the suburbs of Périgueux.* What appearance must the grandson of Boucaud the Hatter assume in order to pass for a real count? If anyone mentioned Boucaud in his presence, he blushed; hence his immobile physiognomy. He was forced to hide the worry which gripped him at every moment, hence that supreme skill with the pistol.

The mistress who would have suited him, who would have brought tranquillity and soon happiness into his life would have been a woman of lofty birth who repeated ten times a day to him:

"Yes, my noble Ephraim, you are a true count, you have all the qualities of a man of exalted birth, even the little faults of pronunciation. At Versailles people used to say 'goin'' and you say 'goin''. You have the same little ridiculous tricks of speech as Monsieur de Talleyrand."

The Comte de Nerwinde should have been the aide-de-camp to a prince whose rights are not recognized as very firmly established. Etiquette was his forte, the element of his happiness; he was one of the accomplices of a society in which people wished to ennoble themselves by orgies, by scandal, by singularity of speech, by a pretence of laughing at everything and even at things presumably respectable. What an existence for the grandson of a hatter!

## XXIV

### *Separate beds*

Among all her joyous companions in pleasure, Lamiel singled out Caillot, a young actress from the Variétés, a woman of much wit, of much impious wit!

At a picnic at Meudon, they walked through the woods together and after a long conversation in which Lamiel was very serious, Caillot taught her not to have wit but rather to make the very best of the agreeable and novel ideas which occurred to her in a manner so unexpected, even by Caillot.

"Sometimes you are unintelligible," Caillot said to her, "explain what you mean better and more fully than you do, and don't talk in Norman patois."

Lamiel was lost in sincerely admirative thanks. Caillot was one of her passions.

"You will be a hundred times better than I am,"

said Caillot in answer to Lamiel's heartfelt compliments, "there is only one danger you must avoid. Dazzled by the transports of gaiety I have sometimes inspired, do not try to imitate me. If you feel like it, dare to be the contrary of what you see me."

The Count noted with an intimate and profound pride that since the appearance of Madame de Saint-Serve, he was more sought after. The authority he enjoyed among men of pleasure had taken enormous strides.

By chance it was hot that summer and the pleasures of the country were in fashion. The cold and rain of the preceding years gave them a gloss of novelty. The richest among the Count's companions gave dinners in honor of Madame de Saint-Serve.

Often, too, to be rid of the sort of gêne that the sight of a host creates, they went on picnics to Maisons, to Meudon, to Poissy and even as far as La Roche-Guyon. But Lamiel's determined taste imposed the law of attending first nights at the theatre. She wished to apply the principles of her master of literature. She had a legion of masters and

she worked like a schoolboy. She even learned mathematics. After country-parties, they reached the play at nine o'clock; then Lamiel's entrance produced all the effect she desired. But the Count scolded her every time for her affectation in never making any noise as she entered her loge.

"Do you wish eternally to look like a chambermaid using her mistress' loge and toilette?"

The charming graces which made of Lamiel a being so new for Paris in 183—, and which, overnight, placed her in the foremost rank in all the salons of the gayer ladies, had no merit in the Count's eyes; indeed, they actually displeased him. These fetching graces owed all their power first to their novelty, secondly to their exquisite naturalness, to precisely that quality which at all times showed that Lamiel did not owe what she was solely to a fashionable salon. She understood the graces of good society, she had even learned to be exclusively faithful to them; but she also had understood that the outré graces such as had been developed in the reigns of Charles X and Louis XVIII were utterly tedious. Always she had be-

fore her eyes the salon of the Duchess de Miossens, where she had been bored to the point of illness. It was to this ennui of yore that she owed her heady charm. Her lively almost meridional temperament must invariably have made it difficult for her to adopt the reserved, stately movements which, in our day, form the basis of life in the salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. But through her most natural shamelessness it was clearly apparent that she knew, that she would have known if need arose, how to behave quite conventionally and to be in the best tone. The frankness of her ways almost looked like a trait of kindness which beckoned you to her side to share the honors and informalities of intimacy.

Now the terror of not being sufficiently considered, which was the Count's cross, rendered him from the beginning insensible to this kind of grace. This charm of Lamiel's was especially evident in the excursions which now formed the occupation of all her days; but these men of pleasure, not in the least philosophically inclined and meagre observers from their very occupation, could not ana-

lyze it, which made it all the more delightful.

One day, Larduel, one of the wags of the crowd, delighted by Lamiel's grace, cried enthusiastically:

"She really is such good company."

"She is far better than that," said the old Baron de Prévan, who was dictator to all these young people, "she is a girl of wit who is bored by the tone of good company. With her sweet gay air, she is boldness itself; she has the courage, more human than feminine, to brave your contempt and that is why she is inimitable. Look well at her, gentlemen, for if ever a whim takes her away from you, you will never find a woman like her."

Another singularity maintained Lamiel at an incalculable height. Amid these dinners, degenerating more and more into orgies, appeared a woman with a lovely face quite obviously showing no relish for the pleasures that are supposed to form the bonds of this sort of company. It was evident that license or what is called pleasure in that world, and, for that matter, elsewhere, had no charms for her. An incredible thing, she was not hated by the ladies; doubtless her extraordinary success

shocked them but *pleasure* meant nothing to her, and she used a tone of subtle gay politeness to her women-friends that subjugated them. Moreover, with all her wit, with her way of laughing at everything which shocked the Count so deeply, possessing a beauty so youthful and so irresistible, never did she call attention in a lively abrupt way to the drawbacks to the ladies' beauty or characters.

The epigram was a thing quite unknown to her lips; never had she been heard to make a malicious reflection on the antecedents, often not a little parlous, of her new friends. It was quite simple: Lamiel was by no means firmly convinced that these ladies erred in behaving as they did. She studied, she doubted, she did not know what stand to take on anything; curiosity was always her sole and devouring passion.

The life which the Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde's pride forced upon her had merely this advantage in her eyes: she saw that according to the way of the world this mode of life is generally envied. By the same token, this mode of life was physically agreeable. Excellent dinners, swift and highly lux-

urious carriages, warm rich loges, tapestried with the coolest of materials and garnished with cushions in the latest fashion, had a merit impossible to deny. The absence of all these brilliant things might have shocked Lamiel, perhaps it would have made her unhappy (though this is not my opinion), but their presence did not bring her sufficient happiness.

The ancient problem that harassed her at Carville still dwelled with all its force in the depths of her heart. "Does this love all these young people speak of really exist for them as king of all pleasures, or am I insensible to love?"

"Well, gentlemen," said the Count to his friends one day, as they marvelled at his happiness, "I do not allow myself to be spellbound by what dazzles you; whether it be an advantage or a misfortune in the firm character Heaven has been pleased to grant me, I am not the dupe of Madame de Saint-Serve, I am not the slave of that rare beauty you spoil for me as though intentionally with all your compliments. I possess a sure means of beating down her pride; just as you see me, for

the last two months, that is to say since the first week after my return to Paris, we have been sleeping apart."

This vain speech changed everything among the Count's friends. These gentlemen saw Lamiel so intoxicated with happiness at the pleasures of society, so avid in her pursuit of amusement that they believed her the happiest of women. Faithful to the vulgar and modish ideas among those who made of pleasure one of the elements necessary to happiness, they could not reconcile perfect contentment with separate beds. These gentlemen felt a new hope rising in their hearts; they laid plans. Six weeks after the Count's rash confession, all his friends had tried their fortune with Lamiel and all had been refused with modesty and without any pretension to feminine virtue:

"Some day, perhaps, but not at present."

One evening, as she was crossing the Forest of Saint Germain to take the steamboat at the port of Maisons, Lamiel saw Caillot's eyes moist with happiness. At this moment, she found the gaiety of society somewhat affected: they were tickling each

other to make each other laugh; it seemed to her that for the last quarter of an hour, wit had vanished. She made up her mind in a trice.

"Which one of these gentlemen (your lover, of course, excepted) has the most wit?" she asked Caillot.

"Larduel."

"What consoler ought I choose to hurt the Count the most? His fatuity is execrable this evening."

"The Marquis de La Vernaye," said Caillot.

"What? That man who acts so coldly?"

"Speak to him for a moment, you will see if he acts coldly towards you; he adores you; really, there is a case of true, earnest, pathetic, passionate and boring love."

"You have found it very dull this evening, have you not?" Lamiel said with a smile as she drew near La Vernaye.

At first sight, there was something chill and reserved about him that evoked the tedium she suffered with the Duc de Miossens. He addressed her such charming and such stilted compliments that she looked for Larduel; he was more than a hun-

dred paces from her, engaged in conversation with Mademoiselle Duverny, of the Opéra. The latter had wanted to ride down to the boat on donkey-back.

"There's a lucky thing for you," she said to La Vernaye.

"What is lucky for me?"

"That I am not disposed to make fun of your compliments turned in the best Madame de Sévigné manner. Come now, do be naïf and simple, console me for the majesty of my lord and master, the Comte d'Aubigné-Nerwinde, if you wish to deserve my affection."

These words made La Vernaye forget all his fund of social compliments; he lost his memory and, finding himself rich in his own right, he said what he thought at the precise moment that he was thinking it, without worrying very much about the incorrectitude of such phrases as escaped him while he improvised.

This first infidelity gave Lamiel no happiness and almost no pleasure. As soon as La Vernaye grew calm, he returned to his Madame de Sévigné

eloquence, or, as Lamiel expressed it, to his "I have a pain in your heart."

"Do you know what hurts you very much?" she asked the Marquis. "Two things. 1) It is about one hundred and twenty years since someone was inspired to print the letters of Madame de Sévigné. 2) Your laundress puts too much starch in your jabots and that gives a certain stiffness to your manners. Do be a little more out of school-hours."

The Marquis was to visit her for the third time one morning, returning from a ride in the Bois de Boulogne, where he had left the Count, when she heard d'Aubigné's carriage in the courtyard. She ran down hastily:

"Quick! quick!" she said to the coachman as she made one bound, without waiting for the arm of a lackey, "Make haste, I do not wish to be at home for a friend with whom I have an appointment."

"Where is Madame going?"

"To the Barrière d'Enfer."

## XXV

## *The Abbé Clément*

As she drove down the Rue de Bourgogne, at the end of the Pont Louis XVI she saw a young man, bespattered with mud. Her heart beat violently within her. He was far indeed from wearing a jabot too stiffly starched—his neckware was a black cravat, reduced to the state of a string, failing to conceal a shirt of coarse cloth, which, moreover, had not been donned clean that morning. It was the unfortunate Abbé Clément.

Lamiel had the coachman stop; the groom came down off his box and kept her waiting at least two seconds, whilst he cared for his handsome white well-adjusted stockings.

"Come, come, there," Lamiel said to him impatiently, though she was never angry at her servants. "Tell that gentleman in black, yonder, that a lady wishes to speak to him. Beg him to step in."

The lackey was so well dressed and the Abbé Clément so simply that the latter exhausted himself in bowing to the lackey; whatever the lackey might happen to say, the Abbé answered:

"But Monsieur, what can I do for your service?"

At length he saw Lamiel, and dressed in what finery! He blushed to the roots of his hair and the lackey was repeating for the third time that Madame desired to speak with him, while he still hesitated to take a seat by her side. A carriage passing by at full trot between Lamiel's carriage and the pavement would have run him over had not the lackey seized him under the arm and pushed him beside Lamiel, who was saying to him:

"Come along, do, get in. Are you ashamed to sit beside me because of your state? Very well, let us go to an unfrequented quarter." She turned to the coachman. "Drive to the Luxembourg," she told him. "How happy I am to see you again!" she said to the Abbé.

The luckless Abbé knew that he must address not a few reproaches to Lamiel, but the light fragrance emanating from Lamiel's clothes intoxi-

cated him. He knew nothing of elegance, to be sure, but like every heart born for the arts, he had an instinct for it and he could not weary of gazing at Lamiel's simple but beautiful toilette. And what charm in the manners of the young peasant girl! What a gentle, divine glance!

"I suppose my clothes worry you," she said to the Abbé.

And as the carriage was turning into the Rue du Dragon, Lamiel had the coachman stop in front of a milliner's. She bought herself a very simple hat; as she alighted at the gate of the Luxembourg gardens, near the Rue de l'Odéon, she left her hat in the carriage and told the coachman to return home.

The kindly Abbé Clément, amazed at what was occurring, began a polished phrase, which, however, announced forthcoming reproaches.

"Allow me, dear and kindly protector, to tell you all that has happened to me since Madame dismissed her poor reader. Yes," Lamiel continued laughing, "I shall make confession to you; will you promise me the secret of the confessional? Not

a word to the Duchess, not a sound to the Duke?"

"Of course, certainly," said the Abbé with a meek but profoundly worried air.

"In that case, I shall tell you everything."

And, indeed, save for the adventure with Jean Berville and the love she believed she felt for the Abbé at that moment, she told him everything; and as in her desire to make him thoroughly grasp the motives of her actions she added all the characteristic details, her story lasted no less than an hour and a half. The Abbé had had time to regain his poise. He unburdened himself of some moral and prudent reflections; but soon he felt that he admired her beautiful hands too much, he felt with shame a burning desire to press them in his own and even to bring them to his lips. He wished to go away from Lamiel; he made her a severe, wise and complete speech on the subject of her transgressions, ending with these words:

"I cannot stay near you and see you again unless you display the steadfast intention of changing your conduct."

Lamiel passionately desired to reason on every-

thing that had happened to her, with a friend so devoted, in whose ideas she had so much confidence and to whom she could say everything. Since she had left Carville, she had not been able to speak sincerely to anyone. She somewhat exaggerated the curious unrest which excited her; she uttered the word "repentance." As long as she had uttered this word, the Abbé could not charitably refuse her a second meeting; he felt the danger in it but he also told himself:

"If any man in the world dare hope to lead her back into the way of righteousness, I am he."

The good Abbé was making a great sacrifice by granting her a second rendezvous, for a terrible idea was storming his heart in spite of himself.

"How easily this adorable girl gives herself when her mind is convinced! She seems to attach but little importance to what is so great an object for all women who, through vice or avarice, do what she allows herself to do as a consequence of the lightness of her singular character. With the open-heartedness and the affection she shows me, I would have but to speak one word."

In the evening, this idea appeared so terrible to Abbé Clément's true piety that he almost set out immediately for Normandy. All night long, he could not close his eyes. The next morning, his agitation increased.

"But, perhaps," he told himself, "Lamiel is about to return to righteousness. If I succeed in persuading her, actions will rapidly follow the convictions of her mind. . . . If I go away, the opportunity is forever lost, I shall eternally reproach myself for the loss of a soul so noble and so beautiful despite its blemishes. Her head led her astray, but her heart is pure."

In his inward confusion, the frank young man went to consult Monsieur l'Abbé Germar, his director of conscience, who, touched by his virtue, did not hesitate: he ordered him to remain in Paris and to undertake Lamiel's conversion.

The rendezvous had been fixed by Lamiel in a little inn at Villejuif, where, one day, a sudden spell of fainting had forced Lamiel to take refuge. The landlady's honest air had struck her. The Abbé found her established in a room on the

second floor; the rest of the house was unoccupied. He recoiled with surprise as he saw her. The common hat she had bought the day before in the Rue du Dragon was covered with a very thick black veil and when Lamiel rose, the Abbé perceived a strange face. Lamiel, who was beginning to know how to read a heart, thought she had divined the reason which had caused the Abbé to hesitate, the day before, to grant her a second meeting. She had made herself ugly with the help of the holly-green. She said with a laugh to the Abbé:

"Yesterday you seem to believe that coquetry was the chief cause of my bad conduct; see how coquettish I am."

She continued in a more serious vein:

"I did not think I was doing wrong in giving myself to young men for whom I had no sort of taste. I desired to know if love was possible so far as I am concerned. Am I not mistress of myself? Whom have I harmed? What person have I failed?"

As soon as she was embarked upon whys and wherefores, Lamiel soon made the Abbé Clément

run dangers far different from those he had feared the day before. She was of a frightful impiety. Profound curiosity, which, to tell the truth, was her only passion, aided by the sort of impromptu education she had been trying to give herself ever since the first days she had spent in Rouen with the young Duke, made her advanced ideas appear horrible to the eyes of the young theologian. To certain of them he was unable to make satisfactory answer.

Lamiel, seeing him embarrassed, refused to profit crudely by the victory she had won in spite of herself; she imagined what cruelty the Count would have adopted in her place; she experienced the joy of feeling herself superior.

"But might not one suppose, my friend, seeing me talking to you for the last hour simply about matters of curiosity, that I have entirely forgotten my earliest benefactors? What has become of my excellent uncle and aunt, the Hautemares? Are they cursing my name?"

The Abbé, much relieved by this return to earthly things, explained to her in the minutest de-

tails that the Hautemares had behaved with a wholly Norman wisdom. They had prudently adopted the fable with which Lamiel had supplied them; everyone in Carville believed her in a village somewhere near Orléans paying her court to a very aged great-aunt to win a place in her will. The whole village had been agog over a postal-order for one hundred francs which the Hautemares had cashed and which the Duke had been inspired to send them from Orléans as a portion of a gift made to Lamiel by her old aunt.

"It is true," said Lamiel dreamily, "the Duke was perfectly good, just as was Madame la Duchesse; only he was very boring."

She learned with deep astonishment that the Duke had lost his head and believed himself profoundly in love with her. He had searched for her out throughout Normandy and Brittany, misled by the letter Lamiel had dated as from X——.

At present the Duke was resisting his mother; the passion he proclaimed was developing his character. Lamiel burst out laughing in simple peasant fashion.

"The Duke with character!" she cried, "ah! how I would like to see him!"

"Do not try to see him," cried the Abbé, mistaking the sentiment that animated the young woman, "would you wish to increase the troubles of Madame? I know through my aunt that what she calls the disobedience of her son is driving her to despair. She wishes to marry him off and she realizes that he will escape her as soon as he marries."

Lamiel asked endless questions on the happenings at home. She had already advanced far enough in life to find a certain charm in returning to the innocent memories of her village. She learned that Sansfin was in Paris; he had had the audacity to suggest himself for the post of Deputy of the district. This pretension had been greeted with such general ridicule that the little humpback could not make up his mind to continue to live in the country. It seemed that one day, in the woods, blinded by rage, he had aimed at M. Frontin, the Mayor's assistant, who had jested with him at the idea of running for Deputy with his appearance.

The numerous conversations Lamiel had with the

Abbé Clément quickened the progress of her mind infinitely. She made several statements utterly foreign to his beliefs; he had been unable to refute them in a manner satisfactory at least to Lamiel; she concluded from this, not through pride but rather through esteem for his character and good faith, that her ideas were true.

The Abbé had said to her:

"You can know a man only by dint of seeing him every day and for a long time."

Lamiel, from that very evening on, withdrew her favor from the Marquis de La Vernaye and smiled charmingly on D——.

"I shall take you," she said to him, "in order to make open fun of the Count and to see his character develop. I wish him to taste the delights of cuckoldry, but I do not sell you a pig in a poke; the part I intend you to play is not without its dangers and you will receive your reward only upon the first jealous folly my lord and master allows to escape him."

She had applied to a bold man. On the following day there was a dinner in the woods of Vin-

cennes and D—— did incredibly mad things to show his love for Lamiel. The Count saw everything, his gloomy character exaggerated everything; only the excess of his anger prevented him from falling into the trap.

"What a source of pride for that little Norman girl! What a proof of inferiority on my part if I were to fight a duel for her sake."

D—— had been mad with love ever since Lamiel had looked tenderly upon him. He went to consult Montror who pledged him to secrecy, then, piqued at certain cavalierly remarks d'Aubigné-Nerwinde had made, he told him.

"Go to all the hatters in Paris, you will certainly find someone who has just set up in business; in the shop ask for a copy of the circular they usually send out in such cases, write the address of M. Boucaud de Nerwinde, at Périgueux, at the bottom and send this circular to your rival."

Montror added that the Count's father had been a hatter.

In order to enjoy the Count's fury, D—— arranged for this circular to be delivered to him in

the midst of a dinner. The Count grew extremely pale, then, after several minutes, said:

"I feel ill, I need air."

He went out and did not re-appear all evening.

## XXVI

## *Conclusion*

### *Outline*

UNDER the reign of d'Aubigné-Nerwinde, she becomes libertine to seek pleasure and recover her good humor, when she realizes the Count is still play-acting. Through growing personal vanity, she seeks to avenge herself upon the Count for his profound indifference.

Knowing that he is to attend a dinner at the Tour de Nesles, where all the fine company of the Opéra goes, (after taking the ladies home, the men go to the b . . . l) she puts on a mask of black velvet, like those worn in the Seventeenth Century, and mingles with the *filles de joie*. The Count arrives, mattresses are spread out on the floor, the gentlemen sit all around, they joke; d'Aubigné begins to speak about her, she tears off her mask; the

Count, so bold in appearance, so proud of his superiority in everything, is thunderstruck.

[A break in the narrative occurs here. According to the plan which follows, apparently Lamiel, no doubt disgusted with the company of d'Aubigné-Nerwinde and perhaps impelled by curiosity, wished to know at close quarters her heroes, the assassins and thieves who had formerly captivated her imagination at Carville.]

Valbayre opens the door again a moment after Lamiel's lover has come out; she hides to play a joke upon him and to see what he has come to do; she sees Valbayre. Valbayre looks about him and without more ado begins opening a desk. Lamiel appears before him; he jumps at her, knife in hand, seizes her by the hair and raises his arm, about to stab her through the heart; in the course of the struggle, Lamiel's kerchief is unloosed, he catches sight of her breast.

"Upon my word, that would be a great pity!" he cries. He kisses her breast, then looses his hold on her hair.

"Give me away and have me hanged, if you like," he says to her.

By that act he wins her. "There's character for you!" She does not say those words; she realizes the fact and suffers the consequences.

"Who are you?"

"I am waging war on society, which is waging war on me. I read Corneille and Molière. I am too well-educated to work with my hands and earn three francs for ten hours' labor."

Although hounded by the police of all nations, and with personal animosity because of the tricks he plays on them, Valbayre takes her proudly to the play; his audacity awakens a mad love within her.

"Is it possible that this love, so bravely vaunted, can be so insignificant for me?" Lamiel wonders.

Anyhow she knows love. She takes to flight, lives with Valbayre and assists him in a crime. The kindly Madame Le Grand hides her in a boarding-school for young ladies where she enters as junior mistress; she finds Sansfin there as doctor. The latter wishes to curry favor with the Duc de Mios-

sens, who dreams of Lamiel because her disappearance piqued him. Of course he is quite incapable of love and passion. Sansfin tells him he believes he has information which may lead to the recovery of Lamiel; the point is to spend fifty louis; he extracts one hundred from the Duke.

The Duke sees her again; she was bored at the boarding-school, she consents to return to him, but she is still madly in love with Valbayre. The Duke's acquired graces and his education struggle against the energy and the inventive genius of Valbayre. . . . The latter's ghastly misery contrasted with the immense fortune of the Duke. . . . At this period, Lamiel has enough knowledge of the world to judge the facts of life rightly, helped especially by the faithful friendship of Madame Le Grand. Lamiel is gloomy, the Duke finds her ways in much better taste.

The Duke's marriage is very much in the air.

Sansfin says to Lamiel:

"You are a fool, the Duke is so hesitant that you might have prevented that marriage and married him yourself."

"I—unfaithful to Valbayre!" cries Lamiel.

Lamiel feels a desire to see the Duchesse de Miossens in her home; the profound boredom of this house pleases Lamiel, who is gloomy.

The Duchess goes to the ball so décolletée, through a desire to rile the Marquise, that she is taken ill with pneumonia.

"She is doomed," Sansfin tells Lamiel, "if you are a wise person and follow my advice to the letter, you will succeed her."

The Duke's consent must in no wise appear doubtful, for Lamiel has become necessary to him. Lamiel could have much money and help Valbayre.

Sansfin arranges for an old libertine out of the pages of Laclos, without principles and penniless, M. le Marquis d'Orpierre, born in upper Provence, near Forcalquier, to recognize Lamiel as his daughter.

Valbayre appears before the Court of Assize; he might have been condemned to death, they only sentence him to the galleys for life. Valbayre through a released convict orders Lamiel to help a band of thieves, his friends, to rob the Duke. They

hope to get fifty thousand francs out of this job. Horrible struggles: Lamiel resists.

The Duchess dies; Sansfin marries the Duke off to Lamiel and receives a good sum of money.

The Duke and Duchess go to Forcalquier. The Marquis d'Orpierre has recognized a natural daughter who is unknown to all his friends. The Duke and Duchess go to Toulon; she sees Valbayre in chains. Three days later the Duchess leaves her husband, taking away with her all he had given her.

Valbayre at a great price buys the papers of a German gentleman (he is from Strasbourg and speaks German), returns to Paris, commits a murder by chance (like Lacenaire) and is sentenced to death.

Lamiel burns the Palace of Justice to avenge Valbayre; bones are found in the débris of the fire burned almost white—they are Lamiel's.

*The End*